MECHADEMIA

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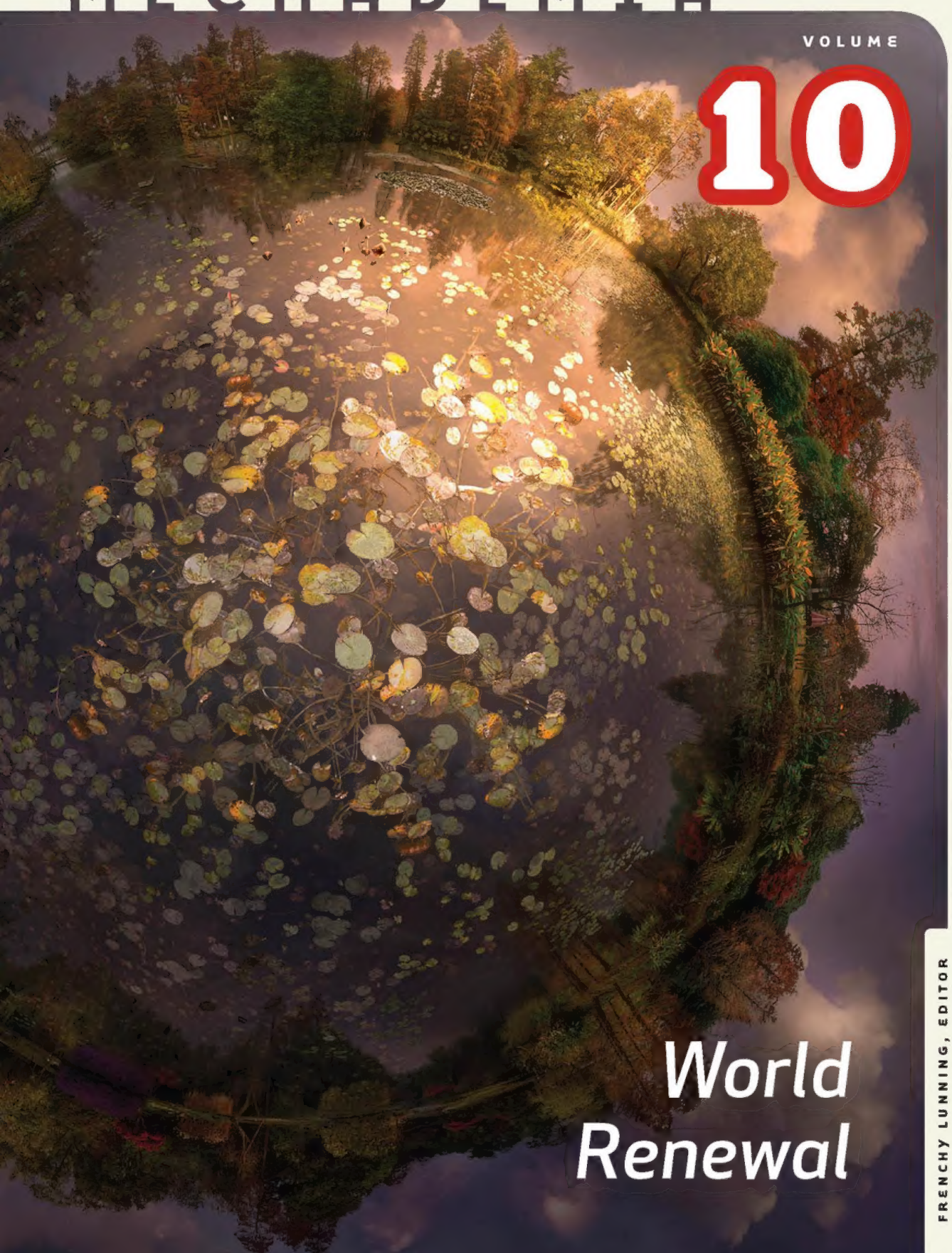
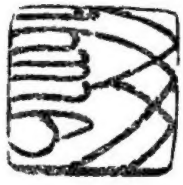


World Renewal

FRENCHY LUNNING, EDITOR

MECHADEMIA 10

World Renewal



Mechademia

An Annual Forum for Anime, Manga, and Fan Arts

FRENCHY LUNNING, EDITOR

Mechademia is a series of books published by the University of Minnesota Press devoted to creative and critical work on anime, manga, and the fan arts. Linked through their specific but complex aesthetic, anime, manga, and the fan arts have influenced a wide array of contemporary and historical culture through design, art, film, and gaming. This series has sought to examine, discuss, theorize, and reveal this unique style through its historic Japanese origins and its ubiquitous global presence manifested in popular and gallery culture. Each book is organized around a particular narrative aspect of anime and manga; these themes are sufficiently provocative and broad in interpretation to allow for creative and insightful investigations of this global artistic phenomenon.

Mechademia 1 *Emerging Worlds of Anime and Manga*
Mechademia 2 *Networks of Desire*
Mechademia 3 *Limits of the Human*
Mechademia 4 *War/Time*
Mechademia 5 *Fanthropologies*
Mechademia 6 *User Enhanced*
Mechademia 7 *Lines of Sight*
Mechademia 8 *Tezuka's Manga Life*
Mechademia 9 *Origins*
Mechademia 10 *World Renewal*

MECHADEMIA 10

World Renewal

Frenchy Lunning, Editor

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Spot illustrations by Rana Raeuchle

"Good Morning: A Post-Disaster Palm-of-the-Hand Story" by Hoshino Tomoyuki was originally written for publication at *Revival & Survival: Words & Bonds* (fukkoshoten.com).

The short story by Moto Hagio was originally published in Japanese in *Nanohana* (Tokyo: Shogakukan, 2012).

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Acknowledgments

A DEEP BOW OF GRATITUDE

These acknowledgments are actually a conclusion of sorts, a conclusion that also ushers in new beginnings, new perspectives, and a new generation of scholars. *Mechademia* began with an idea from a scholar attending SGMS (Schoolgirls and Mobilesuits Weekend Workshop as it was then called) in about 2003. SGMS was already a notable maverick event: not quite a seminar or conference, but not a convention either. Our founding goal had been to become a place for the scholars working in this emergent field to meet in discourse with the fans, who by that time were already vast in number and globally located. We felt it would encourage a fertile conversation, and indeed, it did. It also became evident that most of the scholars were also fans, and that this "field" was unique, in that despite the fact that we had no real place in the academy, we were developing an abundant and rich body of scholarship globally. And so, in 2006, we rolled out *Mechademia 1: Emerging Worlds of Anime and Manga*, published by the University of Minnesota Press.

Since that first book, we have published successive volumes annually, all with themes that speak to the diverse and challenging work found within anime and manga, also increasingly within fan art, fandom theory, gaming, and other media. As we grew, the field also grew, and the SGMS workshop became "SGMS: Mechademia Conference on Asian Popular Cultures." We began to publish translated essays heretofore unavailable in English, yet extremely important to the literature being developed. Also, the volumes' objects of study expanded from Japanese texts to works from across Asia and even the world at large. Our reputation for solid scholarship has increased, and our reach has extended beyond our shores. These achievements were made

possible by our editorial board—and most particularly by a few key individuals who made this series a landmark.

Michelle Ollie, our webmaster, was initially my coconspirator in establishing the series. Her knowledge of publishing and publicity—in addition to her friendship and support—helped to establish our excellent relationship with the University of Minnesota Press, and our wonderful Web presence (mechademia.org). Ursula Murray-Husted, whose lightning speed in all things related to images, has been responsible for resurrecting images in deplorable condition—too small, too washed out, too poorly rendered or scanned. And she can do it in a flash. Michael Baxter, living in Japan and adept at finding obscure artists and recalcitrant Japanese publishers in order to negotiate permissions, has been an invaluable ally and friend, and has been our "man on the ground" in Japan throughout our publication history. Andrea Horbinski, who began with SGMS as a young scholar, has made important editorial contributions to many volumes, most recently as our intrepid citations editor, checking and correcting the formal structure of the citations of each volume. Brian Ruh, Marc Hairston, and Patrick Drazen were our "otaku editors," tirelessly checking titles, names, dates, and spellings of cited Japanese works for accuracy and suggesting links between works that we would otherwise have missed. Our spot illustrators—especially Rana Raeuchle and Barbara Guttmann—created our lovely illustrations, sometimes at the last minute.

We also experienced some painful losses during this period. Dr. Timothy Perper, who with his wife and collaborator Martha Cornog, was responsible for the review sections for most of the run, passed away in 2013. A biologist who specialized in sexuality studies, he found fertile ground for his research in manga and anime. His work is acknowledged in his field, and we are deeply grateful for the work he and Martha did for this series. Also in that year, our friend, collaborator, and board member, Nakatani Hajime, passed away. Hajime's work

> made a particularly important intervention in the growing body of literature on the materiality of writing and the connection between the body and calligraphy. In contrast to the predominant paradigm for understanding Chinese characters in terms of communicative instrumentality or lack thereof, Hajime's serious attention to materiality drew on critical French philosophy. Although Derrida's deconstruction of Western logocentricism in particular captured his imagination, Hajime also took to heart Derrida's warning that Chinese writing should not be considered in terms of logocentricism, but in terms of another powerful movement of civilization.[1]

Hajime, a brilliant scholar of Chinese, Japanese, and French letters, always gave so much of his valuable time to editing essays for *Mechademia*. His death at an early age was particularly heartbreaking.

And now we come to the inner sanctum—to heart of the *Mechademia* books. Wendy Goldberg is our "traffic cop," wrangling authors, submission details, revisions, managing our editorial website, and copyediting many of the final essays. She became the central nervous system for the production of *Mechademia,* maintaining the clarity, coherence, and polish of each volume. Her wry humor and laconic approach to chaos made her the perfect manager for the stray-cat ways of authors and a consistently overbooked editor-in-chief. As a close assistant throughout most of our publication history, participating in the substantive editing that helped to maintain the quality, style, and clarity of the books, she became the perfect choice for editor-in-chief for the future life of *Mechademia,* tentatively named *Mechademia: Second Arc*.

But even closer, profoundly essential, and deeply personal relationships were formed with the initial two associate editors, Thomas Lamarre and Christopher Bolton—both brilliant scholars and fluent in Japanese language, culture, history, and theory—who each brought their unique gifts to the mission of *Mechademia*. As the inner triad, we worked together to form the book themes, tables of contents, and the series trajectory. But with every submission, we also sculpted each essay, illustration, caption, and the overall cogency and tone of each volume. I referred to them as the "chambers of my heart," in that we all had different approaches, opinions, voices, and methods but we all "beat" to the same rhythm to create each distinctive book. They became very close friends to me and will remain so. I—we—owe them everything. The success of *Mechademia* is a direct result of a decade of their consistent, incredibly demanding, diligent work and glistering brilliance.

Finally, Jason Weidemann, our editor at the University of Minnesota Press has remained our stalwart friend and ally, always supporting our unique goals. He has now moved up the editorial ladder, as we pass the torch to a new generation of *Mechademia* editors.

Note

1. "In Memory of Dr. Hajime Nakatani," September 24, 2013: http://www.mcgill.ca/ahcs/channels/news/memory-dr-hajime-nakatani-230738.

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Introduction

FRENCHY LUNNING

COUNTERFACTUAL HISTORIES, PARALLEL UNIVERSES, AND POSSIBLE WORLDS

When we began discussing "passing the torch"—with Tom Lamarre on a shinkansen bound for Tokyo in 2008—we thought looking at the propensity for alternative worlds in anime and manga might be a good and fruitful theme. But after the devastation of 3/11—the earthquake, the tsunami, Fukushima, and other related disasters—we began to perceive compelling implications for this topic on an intensified and immediate landscape. The linkage of this propensity for *world renewal* in anime and manga juxtaposed with the real-life traumas of the political, economic, ecological, and cultural fallout of 3/11, brought into sharp focus the complex constellation of time and space contradictions, paradoxes, and peculiarities in which contemporary Japanese popular culture exists.

This book, as usual, has been divided into four parts. The first, "Passages of As Not," maps desire, disaster, and longing in four essays that, while taking different approaches, all center around the paradoxical movements and nonmovements of the experience of contemporary Japanese people in the midst of radical changes, movements that are at the same time a recognition of tradition. Akira Mizuta Lippit notes the peculiarities of time that are entangled in the event and the experience of disaster—the position of being shot through with the past yet already anticipating a future disappearance: "Disaster destroys the condition of its own possibility and so takes place without taking place, its impossibility and thus its postponement—its deferral—is the event." Christophe Thouny charts both time and space through the fictionalization of disaster in an examination of Sono Shion's film *The Land of Hope* (2012) and begins to "map out this singular topology of Fukushima, Japan

characterized by both the everyday insistence . . . 'There is no escape!'—and a radical temporality of fictionalization asking us to live as if the patriarchal state and the national motherland had already died away." Sabu Kohso also engages in mapping; he charts the structure of desire as understood from the view of producers and consumers in contemporary Tokyo, in both its material and immaterial aspects, a structure that "produces their desires and congeals them into its apparatus." And Hoshino Tomoyuki ends this section with a poetic and personal reflection on the ritual of *tōrō nagashi,* the traditional lighting of the floating paper lanterns to commemorate souls lost in great public disasters, such as war. Recalling the recent disasters of 3/11, Hoshino suggests that the souls floating alight are in fact not of the dead, but of the survivors, recognizing the place of all souls—living and dead—in the larger flow of time and space.

In the second part, "Positions of What If," counterfactual histories are proposed and parallel worlds explored in this compelling sequence of essays. Andrea Horbinski begins by positing the question: "How did things end up like this?" As she admits, it is the historian's kernel impulse, and the fiction writer's first question. Horbinski examines Yoshinaga Fumi's feminist science fiction manga *Ōoku* (2005–present) to imagine an alternative history of "women-kind" in which a woman occupies the supreme position of shogun in early modern Japan. *Ōoku* presents a perhaps utopian scenario that highlights the gender inequalities, injustices, abuses of power, and the "essentially arbitrary nature of putting anyone in . . . positions based on constructed categories such as gender."

Susan W. Furukawa parses the various counterfactual histories written about the historical figure of Toyotomi Hideyoshi, who began life as a peasant farmer and became, through the exercise of his social, political, and military skills, a military dictator of feudal Japan. Furukawa submits that these works "placed him in parallel universes to grapple with issues of Japan's not-so-distant past," in order to "force readers to confront the social implications of reading the 'samurai salaryman' as a modern-day hero."

Matthew Penney collects various neo-nationalist utopian narratives to create from these actual texts a "history" of a counterfactual future. He illustrates a potential common utopian vision that is shared by right-wing authors and creators and projected into an alternative reality and "built around the fantastic conceit that the right's favorite assumptions and predictions have come true," taking the form of a counterfactual "history of Japan, 2015–2050, written in the middle of the twenty-first century."

And finally, this section ends with an original manga from the remarkable

Moto Hagio, a member of the famous *24nengumi*, and much beloved by shōjo manga fans. Translated by Matt Thorn, *Nanohana* (2012) takes its name from the word for *Brassica Rapa*, or "field mustard," a weed said to help rid the soil of radiation contamination. As Moto states, "I made *Nanohana* as a way of cheering myself up. I want to think together with everyone else about Fukushima and Chernobyl, about the future of the Earth, about the future of humankind, and to keep thinking moving forward." We are deeply grateful for the chance to showcase this remarkable artist's work as a gift to our readers.

In the third part, "Worlds of As If," the potential of possible worlds is investigated in three different but related case studies. Satomi Saito looks at three light novels: *Sword Art Online* by Kawahara Reki, *Vampire Hunter D* (1983, *Kyūketsuki hantā D*) by Kikuchi Hideyuki, and *The Melancholy of Haruhi Suzumiya* (2003, *Suzumiya Haruhi no yūutsu*) by Nagaru Tanigawa. "Light novels" are short novels written principally for young adults in Japan, and are prime objects for remediation, especially for gaming. As Saitō suggests, "Their awareness of belonging to multiple worlds—but not belonging to any one world—exemplifies recent trends in imaginary-world making and echoes the business of cross-media franchise, with media producers helping characters traverse multiple media platforms."

Sandra Annett, also exploring the remediated possible worlds of the vocaloid, asks: "What can vocaloid do?"—a question suggested by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in their theoretical concept of the Body without Organs (BwO). Annett looks at the vocaloid as *kyara*—the incomplete character—recognizing the ease with which its nonhistory can be remediated. Annett suggests how, as "evolving image-constructs that thrive on fan adoption, *kyara* cross the planes between psychologically rounded subjects and flattened symbols, between official and unofficial realms of product circulation, between licensed merchandise and free-for-all repurposing on the Internet." Ultimately Annett raises "questions about how power—namely, the power to create and disseminate images, and to shape popular cultures—is distributed through *kyara*."

Finally, Steven R. Anderson examines the unusual, yet commonly experienced "other world" of pain, and the potential of the robotic companion that triggers what he calls "the analgesic imagination." He attempts to understand pain using "theories of pain and artificial intelligence respectively" and to "explore how the narrative of pain is excavated from its privileged location in the sentient body through robot–human interaction, specifically focusing on the transference of pain in Ōtomo Katsuhiro's anime film *Roujin Z* (1991, *Rōjin zetto)*."

The last part, "Loops of Just Then" plays with temporal loops, ethical loops, narrative loops and their interrelationship with subjective states of being in a highly mediated world. Forrest Greenwood begins with the question of "how characters might resist or redirect the act of viewers/producers reaching from the perceptible world of the here-and-now into the mediated world of the character." Within this complex discourse of popular cultural characters composed of highly seductive *moé* characteristics, characters who are caught looping through the many possible worlds found in "game time," Greenwood locates the potential for resistance and agency precisely in "the ability of games to reverse or cycle time, whether through saving and loading game states, through player death and restarting, or through design elements that force the player to revisit previous game states in order to advance."

Pamela Gossin treats the lyrical and lush world of Miyazaki Hayao, whose remarkable animations "reflect a deep synthesis of his artistic and aesthetic philosophy along with his ethical, social, and political values." Gossin sees Miyazaki's work as an example of ecophilosophy, and compares his work with Roderick Frazier Nash's seven foundational values connected with an ethics of nature. Gossin finds that "Miyazaki's environmental philosophy draws upon his culture's aesthetic representations of and historical interactions with the natural world, and it resonates strongly with all seven values of Nash's wilderness ethic."

Brett Hack delves into the peculiar propensity of Japanese society to think "that youth are ever more prone to inexplicable acts of violence—tragedies flare up out of nowhere, for no foreseeable reason, dangerously close to home." Given actual low crime rates, Hack looks into reportage and news media to discover "a cultural motif that sees youth and adults as existing in two separate worlds of experience," coming from misperceptions and misunderstandings between two generations who live in two different cultural worlds.

Finally, Kendall Heitzman looks at "the world five minutes from now," a possible world posited by author Murakami Ryū in his novel of the same name (1994, *Gofungo no sekai*). The novel's subject is an older filmmaker who, out on a jog, finds himself in another world where Japan did not lose World War II but is controlled by the various superpowers, although there is constant resistance by "pure" Japanese in a community called the "Underground." Heitzman argues that the "rise of parallel universe narratives that posit a dystopic postwar Japan have only proliferated as memories of the war have receded into the past and second-generation authors and artists have mined it for material for popular fiction, manga, and anime."

As we anticipate the future of *Mechademia,* we hope this volume does indeed evoke a world renewal, a remediation of past narratives but iterated by a new generation of scholars, editors, artists, and fans, who, from their place in the future, perhaps will be privileged to see more, do more, and renew the mission to continue the discourse of these artistic forms that have so beguiled us in the past. Thank you all for your readership and support—it has truly been a pleasure.

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Passages of As Not

AKIRA MIZUTA LIPPIT

Between Disaster, Medium 3.11

Disasters enter the world from above. *Disaster,* from the Greek *astron* and Latin *astrum* meaning star or planet, falls (*dis-*) from above, from ill-fated stars. In this sense, disasters are always extraterrestrial, even when their elements are deeply terrestrial in nature. They *unearth* the metaphysical elements of the physical world, exposing the otherworldly dimensions of the planet that are embedded within the earth, imminent and inseparable from everything worldly. Not only does the disaster expose the uncanniness of the earth, the foreign soil at its core, but every disaster is also a return, the return of a disaster that has already taken place on earth and is repressed by it and within it. The event of disaster is also a memory of disaster, of this very disaster, taking place now.

What the disaster destroys, according to Maurice Blanchot, is the possibility of a future, suspending it in the *passivity* of disaster, of a past disaster that never entirely passes until the end of the world. "We are on the edge of disaster without being able to situate it in the future," says Blanchot. "It is rather always already past, and yet we are on the edge or under the threat, all formulations which would imply the future—that which is yet to come—if the disaster were not that which does not come, that which has put a stop

to every arrival." What is disastrous about disaster, according to Blanchot is not only the material and psychical forms of devastation but its capacity to destroy its own arrival along with the arrival of all futures. "To think disaster," concludes Blanchot, "(if this is possible, and it is not possible inasmuch as we suspect that the disaster is thought) is to have no longer any future in which to think it."[1]

The disaster that never comes—or rather the disaster *that is* the non-arrival of disaster, of the future, and which exposes the outside that lies always within—comes always *in place* of the disaster. The second, secondary, medium disaster takes the place of a disaster that cannot arrive. What takes place in the disaster, what takes place in place of disaster, what takes the place of disaster as the other disaster, its trace, reminder, revenant? How to understand a disaster that is never what it is, and can never be or become what it is or is destined to be? Not one disaster but two, a second disaster in place of one. "When the disaster comes," says Blanchot, "it does not come. The disaster is its imminence, but since the future, as we conceive of it in the order of lived time, belongs to the disaster, the disaster has always already withdrawn or dissuaded it: there is no future for the disaster, just as there is no time or place for its accomplishment."[2] Disaster destroys the condition of its own possibility and so takes place without taking place, its impossibility and thus its postponement—its deferral—is the event. Everywhere and nowhere, an everywhere that turns each place into a nowhere. And in place of the disaster that never comes, the imminent disaster that never arrives, that never happens, is the disaster. This is the disaster of the disaster that never comes and in this manner, never ends. What is the force of the second disaster, a phantom disaster that always refers to another originary disaster past and still to come? What kind of event does it constitute?

An event without precedent that is also a repetition: unanticipated, accidental, and yet already known because already past without having ever occurred. Such an event took place in Japan on March 11, 2011, now known in Japan as "3.11," an appellation that echoes "9/11" and the September 11, 2001, terrorist strikes of a decade earlier. The magnitude 9.0 Tōhoku or Great East Japan Earthquake (*Higashi Nihon daishinsai*) triggered a massive tsunami, and then a nuclear crisis inscribed with the name of Fukushima, the nuclear power plant that came to stand for the entire crisis, stands alongside the names of Hiroshima and Nagasaki as the names of atomic disaster in Japan. Where did this disaster come from? The vast ocean or the depths of earth? From the heavens, as Tokyo's governor Ishihara Shintarō suggested, calling the events of 3.11 *tenbatsu* (divine punishment)? From the atomic light of the universe,

extracted from the sun and the core elements of the earth and set forth, as Heidegger says, in the frames of a scientific practice that violates the nature of the earth, the very nature of nature itself? What exactly returns in the ghosts of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, in the figures of atomic victims (*hibakusha*), in the very appellation and apparition of *hibakusha* in the wake of 3.11?

The problem of naming disaster, like the problem of a future in which to think the disaster that destroys the future and all futurity, poses the question of its representation. What might be the terms of its representation, of a future representation and representation of the future destroyed by the disaster? For Frances Ferguson, the nuclear disaster is sublime and presents the same problem for thinking the unthinkable. "The notion of the sublime is continuous with the notion of nuclear holocaust," she says. "To think the sublime is to think the unthinkable and to exist in one's own nonexistence."[3] To think what cannot be thought and to be where I no longer am: how might one imagine such a representation? What system, what mode? And what medium?

In the case of Japan's 3.11, the medium is haunted by another disaster, the other nuclear disaster that took place without arriving—that returns, as Blanchot says, from a "time immemorial without ever having been given."[4] A disaster always there, already there at the moment it arrives, and as such, a disaster that never arrives. 3.11 is the disaster between disasters, that takes the place of disaster, the sublime force of a disaster without name and without end. It is this unthinkability and force of nonexistence that charges the Japanese cinema since 1945, a medium framed by disasters past and yet to come. And in this sense, the cinematic medium is the representation of disaster in Japan, a cinema of 3.11 before the fact. The medium of disaster is disaster.

Because there is no future disaster, because the disaster erases the future, its own future, and because the disaster can only come in the future (a future that has been foreclosed), the disaster arrives always a priori: the disaster has always happened before it can happen. It is "the advent," says Blanchot, "of what does not happen, of what would come without arriving, outside being."[5] Outside of being, beyond the borders of existence, but also a form of being that takes place outside, "the posthumous disaster" says Blanchot.[6] Koreeda Hirokazu's film *After Life* (1998, *Wandafuru raifu*) captures the temporal economy of disaster, the production of memory and its projection into the future where one no longer exists, its sublime subjectivity. It is a film that understands and performs the posthumous temporality of disaster, of a cinema that comes too late, always after the fact, and still never arrives *in time*. The film unfolds in a space between life and afterlife, where recently deceased individuals are asked, in the course of one week, to select a single memory,

which they then produce as a film (Figure 1). Once the film is completed, it is screened to the entire liminal community, at which point the subject of the memory and film, of the memory film, vanishes into eternity, into a sublime afterlife. The spectator becomes spectral in this projection, a specter leaving behind only a reel, the trace of a memory that never existed until it was recreated as if for the first time. Kore-eda's spatio-temporal medium establishes a past that cannot be remembered and that has to be created, a future that cannot be imagined or inhabited, and a present that will never take place. Aside from the unique production at the end of life, each individual's lived life has been archived on VHS videotape, allowing that person to review his or her life, to remember those moments that might serve as the single memory of a lived life. From this archive another archive is produced, reproduced, brought into existence on the occasion of its production as film.

The sentimental and reflective surface of the film masks Kore-eda's radical architecture of time and space, of a time and space engulfed in the impossibility of its own existence in the material world and in this or any other life. There is no afterlife in *After Life,* a prosthetic title that takes the place in English of the film's original title in Japanese-English, *Wandafuru raifu,* a citation of Frank Capra's *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946), made one year after the end of World War II, after the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In Capra's

FIGURE 1. The phantom film crew works with each deceased individual to render his or her memory cinematically. Kore-eda Hirokazu's film *After Life* (1998, *Wandafuru raifu*).

film the protagonist George Bailey (Jimmy Stewart) is shown an alternative world, an impossible, virtual, and sublime world in which he never existed. It renders the fantasy of seeing where one is not, where one no longer is, to see the world otherwise, from an impossible perspective, the other world, the world outside. Capra's film induces the sublime thought of the outside, of the unknowable world outside, beyond being, my being. But also the thought that takes place outside, a trope that Michel Foucault ascribes to Blanchot: "The disaster is unknown; it is the unknown name for that in thought itself which dissuades us from thinking of it, leaving us, but its proximity, alone. Alone, and thus exposed to the thought of disaster which disrupts solitude and overflows every variety of thought, as the intense, silent and disastrous affirmation of the outside."[7] To think where one is not is to think disaster, to think an imagined future that cannot take place because one will never be there when it arrives. That future world arrives without one, ahead of one, and conflicts with one's existence. And so, the disaster. *It's a Wonderful Life* unfolds an imagined and imaginary disaster in a future, an alternative future that never takes place. Kore-eda's revision of Capra's film opens a space of memory that is projected forward into a future that never arrives. In this space—which is a medium space, the space of the medium, of cinema—existence is manufactured, life is affirmed and reaffirmed where there is none. Kore-eda's memory machine, his fantastic cinema, establishes each life as lived by giving that life its afterlife, its possibility as past life in the future. These lives have not been lived until they are filmed and projected, allowing the subject to withdraw from the scene of his or her life, and for that life to end and have been lived. Cinema makes possible life and the end of life. For Kore-eda, cinema itself seems to be the exemplary apparatus but also representation of the afterlife. And in the exchange of life for afterlife, for life redeemed by cinema, the disaster passes from life to cinema, to the medium disaster. It is life that comes from and takes place outside in the space of disaster, in the ex-spatio-temporality of disaster.

In *After Life,* life will have been lived when it is remembered, but it can be remembered only when it has been produced as a film: materialized, exteriorized, and released into a public, collective space. When the memory is no longer one's own, proper to oneself, but shared, collective, communicated; when one is no longer subjected to or by it, then one becomes a free subject, unhaunted, a historical subject no longer bound by the disaster immemorial. Upon its screening in the spectral theater, the subject of the film memory disappears, and this is the affirmation: his or her ability to withdraw from the scene of representation, to exit the perpetual present of this atopic space

between life and death. Only in its capacity to disappear, to die, can the subject be said to have lived. It is the capacity to die that renders the capacity to survive life and death, and to enter an afterlife, a postlife or postwar space beyond the disaster.

The fantastic dimension of *After Life,* the impossibility of a body that survives life, lives on beyond life, and the impossibility of securing and framing this body in a medium (even a ghostly, spiritual one) is tempered by Kore-eda's use of a documentary style (hand-held video, interviews, natural lighting, and location shooting) and his inscription always (here and elsewhere) of a vantage point outside. With a shared background in television documentary, Kore-eda and his cinematographer Yamazaki Yutaka bring to their film a realism that suffuses the fantastic diegesis. The blend of realist form with the ghostly narrative realizes the material, photographic qualities of a medium that appears to secure an actual body in time and space and that animates this body, and makes it *live,* simultaneously with the spectral, aural properties of the medium that dislocate the body from the place where it appears to be, reanimating it elsewhere in the virtual spaces of a film world that is structurally akin to the time-space of disaster. Kore-eda's narrative thus provides a representation that makes visible the logic of disaster, its demands and dilemmas. In the space that Kore-eda exposes, an outside folded inside (the interstitial way station is filmed primarily in a school, the extraordinary framed within the ordinary, the uncanny within the familiar), a thought and image of disaster becomes possible. It is in this place that one must imagine the end of one's own existence, one's nonexistence, and the existence that survives (one). One is here and not here, still here and no longer here, no longer here and not yet there, no longer in *this* world, not yet in *that* world. It is possible here in the atopic space between life and afterlife. Kore-eda's documentary look makes the disaster tangible, and makes imaginable the condition of living in and through it, after and beyond it.

After Life imagines the task of assigning images to life, of making all life—however painful, however forgettable, however unimaginable—imaginable. The question of imagining disaster, of thinking and imagining and putting images to the *unimaginable* remains the event's most enduring problem. A challenge that resonates in the registers of history, ethics, and metaphysics, the task of imagining is as impelling as it is imperative. For Georges Didi-Huberman, thinking about images of the *Shoah,* the task of imagining the unimaginable, requires the delineation of images from figures and the refusal to foreclose visibility in the face of a catastrophic visuality. "The 'unimaginable' of Auschwitz," says Didi-Huberman, "forces us not to eliminate, but to *rethink*

the image when an image of Auschwitz, suddenly, concretely, even if it remains an incomplete image, appears before our eyes."[8] Even if such an image appears under the sign of what Genevieve Yue calls a "Medusan optics," a visuality that petrifies the observer, destroying, in the very act of looking, the subject that looks.[9] Even if nothing is left but the image, even if the disaster erases everything else, leaving only the image of disaster, of unimaginable destruction, "in spite of everything," says Didi-Huberman, the image survives the disaster of its own unimaginability. An image is, in this sense, an afterlife par excellence, borne of the unimaginable disaster, of the disaster of unimaginability.

After Life redeems disaster by affirming the life that disaster makes visible. Kore-eda's affirmation comes from the production of an image of the unimaginable, an image of the singularity of life and of death, of life and death together, of one's life given to another, to the other and the other world. Cinema is where, says Jean Louis Schefer, one learns "the astonishment of being able to live in two worlds at once."[10] Here and elsewhere, in his life and her life, but also inside and outside life as such. This life—once imagined as one life, as one's own life—comes into focus, returns to one as two, no longer one's own, no longer proper to one. It returns to the place where one no longer is but hasn't yet ceased to be. A life that is already an afterlife, another life, the other's life to which one is bound, and in which one is lost. All ones lost. And regained; the self that returns to one on the occasion of its loss is another second self. One, then two. But even more than another, and beyond even a second self, one becomes in this film an entirely new form of life. Schefer calls these "ordinary men" of cinema "a species, for the first time, dedicated to the possible, unlimited, and infinitely repeatable spectacle that breathes within us . . . Thus, for the first time, and for a final moment, we see what remains of the vanished world."[11] The life of cinema is always an afterlife; its images are the ordinary (everyday, random, undistinguished) afterimages of a vanished world. In this sense, they are images of the unimaginable after all, in spite of all the images in the world.

As one of *After Life*'s protagonists Mochizuki (Arata) discovers, his melancholia, his inability to select a memory and move on into the afterlife are intricately enmeshed with the lives of others, with the recently departed Watanabe Ichirō (Naitō Takashi), whose wife Kyōko (Kagawa Kyōko) was originally Mochizuki's fiancée. Mochizuki served in Japan's military, was wounded in the Philippines, and died in Tokyo on May 28, 1945, several months before the war's end. Having lost her fiancé, Kyōko eventually married Watanabe, whom Mochizuki is now helping to move into the afterlife. In this way Mochizuki is linked across time and several worlds to both Watanabe and Kyōko, and to the

images they produce and leave behind. Seeking out Kyōko's eternal film in the archives, Mochizuki discovers that her single memory is of him, Mochizuki, sitting beside her on a bench. Decades later, Watanabe shares the same bench with Kyōko in the memory he selects. They are bound, these three phantoms, by the intertwined lives, loves, tragedies, and memories that remain unspoken, withheld to the end and beyond it, released later, after the end in these projections into the other world.

In Kore-eda's film, the afterworld's staff—the individuals that assist the newly deceased arrivals at the way station—are themselves specters who have refused for one reason or another to select a memory. Unable to move on into the other world, into eternity, they remain suspended in an endless present, unredeemed by any past or future. Until they choose a memory, an image of life, their own life, each is destined to remain between life and afterlife, this space itself a kind of afterlife that never comes, because life itself hasn't yet ended. In this space of indetermination, in this temporality of disaster that suspends the arrival of any future, the staff are in a purgatory, waiting to choose, waiting perhaps for the memory, the single memory event to come to them from within, from an inside that no longer belongs to them, as if from outside. Mochizuki appears young but has been in this purgatory for fifty years, immobile and apparently unmourned. Perched between a personal and historical disaster that is an effect of Japan's war, and a future that never arrives because it is diverted into another's future, another's life, Mochizuki comes to exist in this interstice, discovering himself in it even as he loses himself to the lives, desires, dreams, and memories of others. He inhabits the space of disaster, the space and time of sublime subjectivity, which is the place that precludes me, that remembers me only as afterthought. Mochizuki breaks the aporia by finding himself in the memories of others, becoming integral to the flow of life elsewhere even after his own life has ended. He finally selects a memory drawn not from his past life but from his time at the way station, his life in between, from the phantom space between life and afterlife. He thereby secures for himself and for eternity a memory of that which exists outside of memory, a memory of the outside beyond life, beyond this or that world (Figure 2).

Mochizuki films himself sitting on the same bench used by Watanabe Ichiro and his wife Kyōko (for different emotional purposes), a bench he once shared with Kyōko. But in his memory film, the bench is a prop taken from the phantom world he inhabits, *exhabits,* a souvenir from the outside folded into his eternity. He imagines himself there, here in the eyes of others. His memory film briefly shows his colleagues aiming the camera at him to make

FIGURE 2. Mochizuki and Shiori look at each other before the screening, their last live look before eternity engulfs them. Kore-eda Hirokazu's film *After Life* (1998, *Wandafuru raifu*).

the film, inscribing them into his eternity through this eyeline match, taking them from purgatory and redeeming their time there, even if they themselves are unable to (Figures 3 and 4). In Mochizuki's gesture, his act of remembering, of recollecting that which defies memory (that which can never truly pass into the past), Kore-eda redeems disaster by making it the space from which one comes into being and in which one survives the catastrophe past and still to come. As Schefer says of another vampire's death, Carl Theodor Dreyer's vampire cinema, "it's not death here, nor quite the end of its deferral but the incredible disappearance of a body within the image."[12] Mochizuki vanishes into the image where he appears, reappears, remains.

Kore-eda's film exemplifies Japan's cinema after 1945, one that hangs in the balance between a past that has never truly passed (as past that remains unthought and thus uninscribed), and the future return of the past that never comes but hovers over the present from the outside. Through the individual characters that seek to locate themselves and their futures in a single memory produced as a film, Kore-eda stages Japan's place within a past not yet past, and as such, destined to return in lieu of a future. The memory machine that Kore-eda imagines, the process of remembering as a form of living (and of forgetting), generates an image of the cinema itself, a national cinema that works through the aporias of time in suspense. Kore-eda's documentary fiction dramatizes this condition, allegorizes it as a reflection not only of national memory and remembering but as a condition uniquely suited to cinema, to

FIGURE 3. Mochizuki looks directly into the camera and through it, toward the crew that films him, but also into the depths of an eternity produced in and by the cinema. Kore-eda Hirokazu's film *After Life* (1998, *Wandafuru raifu*).

FIGURE 4. A reaction shot of the film crew, they are seeing and being seen, seeing themselves being seen. Kore-eda Hirokazu's film *After Life* (1998, *Wandafuru raifu*).

the properties of a medium that opens the space between documentary and fiction, between actual and imaginary forms, in the temporality of a perpetual present. *After Life* locates Japan inside its cinema, and inside a disaster that perpetually engulfs the present. As Schefer says of death in the cinema, "perhaps it just gives a figure to a period of waiting that had previously had no object?"[13] The events of March 11, 2011, of 3.11, underscore the precarious afterlife of Japan suspended between disasters. The force of its devastation recalls previous disasters: the 1923 Great Kantō Earthquake in Tokyo (which *After Life* references) and the 1995 Great Hanshin Earthquake in Kobe, but also the 1945 atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which 3.11 reveals as *unpast,* continuing in the suspended afterlives of disaster.

In *Distance* (2001), Kore-eda resumes the theme of suspended time, of time lost in the paralyzing effects of a disaster without end. Relatives and friends of people who belonged to a group suicide cult gather at the site of their mass death to commemorate the event, to remember the circumstances of their own lives and of those they lost, and to share their stories. Though they had planned this as a daytrip, the group is stranded in the remote forest and forced to spend the night together cut off from the outside, a scenario that recalls *After Life.* For them, at an irreducible remove from the epicenter of disaster, this anniversary marks the event of a disaster that never ends and never comes. They are unable to reduce the distance that separates them from the disaster. In his review of the film, Tom Mes describes *Distance* as Kore-eda's "most radical attempt at [the] fusion" of documentary and fiction, a trait that defines his filmmaking.[14] Among the group is an imposter, Atsushi (also played by Arata, who plays Mochizuki in *After Life* and appears frequently in Kore-eda's films), a phantom survivor whose place in the group remains unexplained. He is an outsider to this community of virtual outsiders, outside to the second degree, and his infiltration illustrates the varying states of corporeality in Kore-eda's film. Many bodies have perished in a mass suicide, although they are recalled, reanimated in flashback. Still other bodies survive this death, and live on, although now at some distance from life as such, from the life that continues untouched elsewhere. And then Atsushi steps into this phantom world and chooses to live among the virtual ghosts, those suspended between life and death, life and afterlife, death and survival.

How then to understand the disaster from which Japan emerged in 1945, the first atomic bombing of civilians anywhere in the world, and the disaster that returns and to which Japan returns in the events of 3.11 that led to a nuclear meltdown in the Fukushima Dai-ichi Nuclear Power Plant? How to understand this not as three separate events (earthquake, tsunami, and

nuclear meltdown); nor as two separate nuclear disasters (1945 and 2011); nor even as one disaster that returns at a distance, its closure deferred? Rather, how to understand the space between disaster, the space suspended between 1945 and 2011, a space of suspense but also a space and time marked by the suspension of space and time? *It is the disaster*: that which falls between disasters. In an end without end, and an end without future, without afterlife, the disaster comes to pass, arrives as the event of a memory without possibility. Only cinema understands this, only cinema can reproduce and work through this "memory of the present," to borrow Jacques Derrida's phrasing, of a present that peels away from itself, producing in the moment, now, a memory already.[15] Mochizuki's spectacle turns his spectators and every spectator into specters. It is his fate, and that of cinema, to remain present in the present as its memory. The Japanese cinema reflects the state of disaster (the state disaster) that never leaves and never ends, only to turn and return repeatedly as an effect of history, of the end of history without end, of a postwar that extends into eternity, a single memory of the endless war carried into the present as its symptom; it understands the place of disaster in the medium itself as the medium disaster, the disaster between disasters.

Notes

1. Maurice Blanchot, *The Writing of the Disaster,* trans. Ann Smock (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), 1.

2. Ibid., 1–2.

3. Frances Ferguson, "The Nuclear Sublime," *Diacritics* 14, no. 2 (summer 1984): 7.

4. Blanchot, *The Writing of the Disaster*, 4.

5. Ibid., 5.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

8. Georges Didi-Huberman, *Images in Spite of All: Four Photographs from Auschwitz,* trans. Shane B. Lillis (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 62, original emphasis. Didi-Huberman's sustained reflection on four photographs from Auschwitz takes the form of a spirited defense of seeking to imagine that which has been subjected to the violence of "*disimagination*" (20), to the radical erasure of the human figure and its images: "What the SS wanted to destroy at Auschwitz was not only life, but also—whether within or beyond, before or after the executions—the very form of the human, and its image with it" (43). For Didi-Huberman, such unimaginable violence produces a paradoxical form of imagination: "we must say that Auschwitz *is only imaginable*" (45, original emphasis). What defies imagination, comprehension, description, returns in the form of an image that demands an impossible imagination.

9. Genevieve Yue, "Medusan Optics: Film, Feminism, and the Forbidden Image" (PhD diss., School of Cinematic Arts, Division of Critical Studies, University of Southern California, 2012).

10. Jean Louis Schefer, "Cinema," in *The Enigmatic Body: Essays on the Arts,* ed. and trans. Paul Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 110.

11. Ibid., 130. "The ordinary man of the cinema," says Schefer, "makes a preliminary and redundant announcement: the cinema isn't my profession. I go to the cinema for entertainment, but by chance I learn something there apart from what a film will tell me" (110). In turn, ordinary men (and women, children, and animals) become extraordinary once they enter the other world of cinema, undergoing a metamorphosis not only of ontogeny but also of phylogeny. Of these new *men* of the cinema species, Schefer continues: "These men are infinite; they're constrained by the destiny represented by a history they will never cross; they are, all the same, repeatable; they cannot live easily in the universe, except through its mobile objects—as if their light could be our definition and as if, within us, in a new consciousness, their very scale and proportion could change like the dimensions of our visible world" (130). Repeatable and yet—or perhaps because of this—ahistorical, Schefer's infinite men exist in the mobility of cinema as such, a mode of action distinct from that of the physical world or universe. Being in cinema defines another form of being entirely, the same me as another species aligned with the contours of the visible rather than physical world.

12. Ibid., 138.

13. Ibid.

14. Tom Mes, Review of *Distance, Midnight Eye* website, May 10, 2001, archived at http://old.midnighteye.com/reviews/distance.shtml.

15. Jacques Derrida, *Memories for Paul de Man,* trans. Cecile Lindsay, Jonathan Culler, and Eduardo Cadava (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 60.

CHRISTOPHE THOUNY

The Land of Hope: Planetary Cartographies of Fukushima, 2012

In his 2012 film *The Land of Hope* (Kibō no kuni), the Japanese director Sono Shion presents a cartography of Japan caught in a messianic time between two ends, after a second earthquake has hit Northeast Japan. In this article, I analyze Sono's movie as an exercise in cartographic writing that attempts to map out this singular topology of Fukushima, Japan, characterized by both the everyday insistence of the reality principle—"there is no escape!"—and a radical temporality of fictionalization asking us to live as if the patriarchal state and the national motherland had already died away.

Resonating with a variety of works, from the 1995–96 TV series *Neon Genesis Evangelion* to Tawada Yōko's *Fushi no shima* (2012, The island of eternal life), *The Land of Hope* attempts to draw the map of a world that has lost any anchor in the present, where a human population in exodus is overexposed to the toxic atmospheres of a dying world.[1] Borrowing Rosi Braidotti's concept of necropolitics,[2] I read *The Land of Hope* as a radical critique of the complicit discourses of globalization (*kokusaika*) and national consumerism in which Japan and the global world of nation-states try to contain the sickening atmospheres of Fukushima. I argue that by staging the catastrophe of Fukushima as a question of border making and disjointed temporalities, Sono Shion reopens a

THE LAND OF HOPE ATTEMPTS TO DRAW THE MAP OF A WORLD THAT HAS LOST ANY ANCHOR IN THE PRESENT, WHERE A HUMAN POPULATION IN EXODUS IS OVEREXPOSED TO THE TOXIC ATMOSPHERES OF A DYING WORLD.

space of fictionalization in which it becomes possible to experience, in the time that remains after the end, a planetary moment. Building on Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Ursula K. Heise's work, I will show how *The Land of Hope* generates a planetary cartography characterized both by a radical alterity to the human and the impossibility of access to exteriority of any sort.[3]

Sono Shion is well known for his movies addressing contemporary social problems, in particular dysfunctional nuclear families, in a unique style combining erotic-grotesque situations with an exaggerated theatricality, claustrophobic interior spaces, and monumental landscapes. *Suicide Club* (2001, *Jisatsu sākuru*), *Noriko's Dinner Table* (2005, *Noriko no shokutaku*), and the epic *Love Exposure* (2008, *Ai no mukidashi*) have received wide attention and critiques from both domestic and international audiences.[4] *The Land of Hope* is unusual in Sono Shion's filmography in that it is a major production with popular actors that needed multinational funding from Japan, Taiwan, and Korea.[5] The movie is ambitious and the target audience wider, elevating Sono's usual domestic drama formula to the level of a national drama. *The Land of Hope* can be seen as a follow-up to his 2011 movie *Himizu,* which told the story of a high school boy who killed his father after the Fukushima earthquake.[6] However, where in *Himizu* the Fukushima catastrophe appears more as background for what could be a classic 1990s family drama, *The Land of Hope,* released one year later, focuses directly on the intricate ties after Fukushima between humans and the land, the state and the territory, the Japanese and Japan.

The plot of *The Land of Hope* is very simple, focusing on the Ono and Suzuki families. When a magnitude 9 earthquake hits the fictional prefecture of Nagashima, state officials come and arbitrarily establish a 20km perimeter around the nuclear plant. The Suzuki family, who lives inside this area, is forcibly evacuated, while the Ono family, on the other side of the made-up fence, can remain. The movie then follows the Ono family. The father and mother decide to stay in their homeland, a choice symbolized by the powerful image of the dying tree in the garden of the ancestral house (Figure 1), while the son and his pregnant wife decide to leave and find a place not contaminated by radiation. The movie concludes with the young Ono couple on a beach, realizing that radiation is everywhere, while the Suzuki son and his girlfriend, still in Nagashima, decide to get married in the middle of a field of ruins.

FIGURE 1. The Ono father. *Kibō no Kuni,* dir. Sono Shion, DVD (Shōchiku, 2012).

The Land of Hope takes place in a fictional place and time, a few years from now when a second earthquake hits the prefecture of Nagashima, causing the explosion of another nuclear plant. By repeating the Fukushima catastrophe in a fictional future, Sono creates a map of the multiple discourses that surround the Fukushima problem. Stressing the double impossibility of forgetting the traumatic past by either returning home or escaping into an uncontaminated outside world, he allows us to think Fukushima in a planetary moment. The repetition of the catastrophe opens a fictional space with a unique temporality. It is a time without origins, without national identity but to be nomads in the planetary landscapes of a deserted world.

I thus propose to analyze the planetary cartography of *The Land of Hope* by using Italian scholar Rosi Braidotti's concept of necropolitics.[7] Braidotti borrows in part from Achille Mbembe's provocative critique of the concept of biopolitics. Mbembe argues that "the notion of biopower is insufficient to account for contemporary forms of subjugation of life to the power of death [. . .] and the creation of *death-worlds,* new and unique forms of social existence in which vast populations are subjected to conditions of life conferring upon them the status of *living dead.*"[8] In Braidotti's reading, however, necropolitics become a positive and creative tool that opens new possibilities for rethinking the social, too often shut down by the instrumental use of the concept of biopolitics. I thus understand necropolitics as a political mode of fictionalization that allows us to imagine another space of social life, a planetary space of the social. Necropolitics asks us to live *as if* we were already dead, *as if* our world was already gone, *as if* it had become a thing. This does not mean rejecting our countries to escape into another dimension

but instead to let them live and decay. *The Land of Hope* offers us a fictional map of the world, a planetary cartography that can teach us how to live after the end of hope, because there is no hope for returning home and restoring Japan and the global world of nations to a healthy state, whatever that could be.

I organize my argument into four parts. Starting with a simple question, "Why talk about Fukushima?" I approach the question of Fukushima in terms of a planetary event. I then briefly present the historical relation between the Tōhoku and Tokyo after World War II and discuss how Sono Shion problematizes the question of the catastrophe in terms of the state power and its rhetorics of cartography that impose fixed boundaries on the local population. Then I show how Sono presents the Ono parents as a mythical couple representing the Father-State and the Mother-Land, each embodying an essentially different relation with the land. *The Land of Hope* avoids the easy fall into a nostalgic desire for the lost past of Japan and the utopian escape into a healthy future, the dual desires at work in the official narrative of postwar Japan. The movie rather offers us a place from which to imagine a possibility of life after the end of hope, in a dying world that we have chosen to embrace as our home, and let live as it is. In conclusion, I argue that the two figures of the hysterical mother and the ghost child ground a new temporal relation with the land.

WHY TALK ABOUT FUKUSHIMA?

Before discussing *The Land of Hope,* I think it necessary to first ask ourselves, Why talk about Fukushima? Or 3.11? Or the Great East Japan Earthquake? What are we even trying to talk about? As social critic Sasaki Ataru remarked after the catastrophe, there is something very problematic in this coercive demand for public statements, for taking a position. Why talk about Fukushima?[9] Is it even about Fukushima that we should talk? Does not the name "Fukushima," or the more neutral and accepted denomination "Great East Japan Earthquake," erase the complexity of the event and in fact its very eventfulness and possibilities of life?

The issue of naming an event in relation to a place raises the more important question of solidarity in the face of disaster, too often answered by subsuming a diversity of experiences into an amorphous and potentially homogeneous "us." While some have claimed that we are all Japan ("todos somos Japón") and that we should all be concerned by a catastrophe that is still

ongoing, I would rather argue that nobody is Japan, or Fukushima, because we have become foreigners to the new cartography that emerged in the wake of a dual catastrophe, the earthquake-caused tsunami and the nuclear explosion.[10] As Kimura Saeko remarks, Sono Shion felt it necessary for *The Land of Hope* to avoid conflating, as in *Himizu,* the earthquake and the nuclear catastrophe. In *Himizu,* shots of the ruined landscapes of the Tōhoku appeared almost gratuitous, reducing the catastrophe to the well-known image of a postapocalyptic world and a dystopian nation. Working on *The Land of Hope,* Sono Shion acknowledged that, "even though it is the same disaster area, the tsunami catastrophe and the Fukushima catastrophe are completely different."[11]

The Japanese social critic Osawa Masachi distinguishes two temporalities at work in the dual catastrophe: a punctual event coming from the outside and redrawing the map of society (the 9/11 paradigm) and an ongoing everyday eventfulness that keeps redefining our very ground of experience.[12] We could then speak of two essentially distinct events. And at the same time, their combination generates an entirely new condition. The earthquake and the ensuing meltdown in the TEPCO facility have combined both temporal dimensions, bringing the ground to the surface and revealing the very historical structures and contradictions at work in postwar Japanese society. And more important, the dual catastrophe manifests the radical alterity of this planetary condition, before any sense of communion and solidarity.

This radical disruption of temporality and of place identity implies first that this is not a local problem, as in a classical nested hierarchy of places. Fukushima cannot be contained and isolated in a single place when the rest of us can leave safely. Nobody is the event of Fukushima means that the event is not of Fukushima, Japan, East Asia, or the global. It manifests the situation of a "dwelling in crisis" that characterizes contemporary risk societies, of a situation tied to territories and systems "that are understood to encompass the planet as a whole."[13] The name of Fukushima displaces the hegemonic paradigm of risk and security and, as Jean-Luc Nancy argues, makes visible the interconnectedness of our global capitalist space in the emergence of a planetary cartography.[14] Nobody is Fukushima, and as such, it cannot be contained inside a national territory, a regional market, or a global order. The task is now to imagine other cartographies of the social beyond the dichotomy "we (all) are" and "they are (but we are not)." By problematizing local discourses of resistance and victimization in terms of the question of Tokyo imperialism and statist rhetorics of cartography, I argue that *The Land of Hope* allows us to imagine the Japanese as part of a population in exodus on a planetary space.

TOKYO IMPERIALISM

To understand how and why Sono Shion creates this disquieting image of the Japanese as a population in exile in a dying land, we need to understand that, historically, the Tōhoku region has been in a relation of subjection and dependence to the Tokyo metropolitan center. As the sociologist Oguma Eiji remarks, the Tōhoku in postwar Japan can be defined as "a supplier of primary produce and work force."[15] The National Land Formation Plan of 2008 claims that "large cities and rural areas are mutually dependent in that the former lead the latter as headquarters providing urban functions, economic activities, and international exchanges, while the latter supply the former with personnel, food, water, energy, and so forth."[16] Many have thus qualified this relation between Tokyo and the Tōhoku as a form of internal colonization of the periphery.[17] In the aftermath of the 1973 oil shock, Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei decided to accelerate the construction of nuclear plants in the Tōhoku, declaring: "We're building something that can't be built in Tokyo. We'll build them and make Tokyo send lots of money [to the depopulated areas of nuclear plants]."[18] Under the narrative of cultural exploitation, what is apparent here is the capitalist logic of primary accumulation and unevenness allowing for the reproduction of value in the center, Tokyo. With the nuclear age, the natural resource has become land and human labor, the nuclear industry heavily benefiting from the reproduction of the uneven relation of power between the center, Tokyo, and the periphery, the Tōhoku.

The Tōhoku only became a supplier of rice after World War II, when Japan could no longer benefit from rice production in its colonies in Taiwan and Korea. But its role as supplier of energy goes back to 1937 with the establishment of the Tōhoku Promotion Electric Company. In postwar Japan, both rice and electric energy were integrated into a monopoly controlled by the state, a legacy of the Total War system. When nuclear power became a new field of industrial development after President Eisenhower's 1953 speech on "Atoms for Peace," nuclear plants themselves became a form of "rural development policy." With the development of small, component-parts, family-based industries, the impoverished lands of the Tōhoku also became a supplier of young and cheap labor for Tokyo. But with the globalization of the 1990s, the liberalization of the national market imposed by the United States, and increasing competition from developing Asian countries, shops closed, revenues dropped, and the population diminished drastically.[19]

The Land of Hope only partially addresses this context of Fukushima and the Tōhoku, portraying the Fukushima population as aging farmers (the Ono

and Suzuki families), attached to their land and tradition, while the young Suzuki son and his girlfriend play the expected role of the rebellious and good-natured youth who in the end decide to stay. However, as I explained in the introduction, *The Land of Hope* takes place in a fictional prefecture named Nagashima. The use of the name "Nagashima" creates an interesting displacement that challenges both official discourses of national resilience and attachment to ancestral dwelling places. Nagashima refers to Fukushima, as well as Nagasaki and Hiroshima, the two cities nuked by the United States respectively on August 6 and 8, 1945. With Nagasaki, Hiroshima became the origin of the postwar narrative of Japan, heralding the Emperor as the savior who ended the war to avoid further destruction on the population. We now know that this "foundational narrative" was engineered after the fact, and that the Japanese government and Imperial family were only negotiating to remain in power, which they did.[20] Nagashima comes, then, to stand for Japan and becomes the image of a country suspended between the two levels of the local and the national. In other words, Sono Shion relocates Fukushima, and potentially Japan as well, outside the international world of nation-states and global capitalism, inside a planetary space. And this is realized by a critique of the rhetorics of cartography of the Japanese state.

THE RHETORICS OF CARTOGRAPHY

The landscapes of Nagashima present an interesting tension between the natural, the social, and the political. In the opening sequences, we are presented with a humanized nature: geometric fields and straight roads on the outside with urban streets on the inside. The catastrophe disturbs the national fantasy of a good life both through the natural disaster and in the brutal intervention of state officials in white suits.[21] The natural returns as a deserted landscape of human ruins and lost animals, and time, as I will argue in the next part, is no longer linear but suspended in a present immediacy. Nature returns to disrupt the human world as a radical external force generating a new landscape onto which the state attempts to impose a different cartography, arbitrarily remapping the everyday living space of Nagashima. Nature and the state thus return as destroying external forces, provocatively juxtaposed and identified with the Ono parents, the crazy mother and the lost father.

As in *Himizu*, filmed partly in the devastated areas of the Tōhoku, *The Land of Hope* presents us with spectacular landscapes that powerfully illustrate this imposition of statist power on the lives of local inhabitants. Yet

what is striking in those landscapes (Figure 2) is not so much the embodiment of state violence in the fence crossing across the neat geometry of paddy fields as the similarity of logics at work here. A square is no more violent and arbitrary than an oblique straight line crossing a field or the sky. In fact, what this image really shows is the banality of such operations of state power, of the rice and energy industry at the very heart of the lives of the Ono family. Postwar experimental works by Adachi Masao such as *A.K.A. Serial Killer* already showed this banality of state power at the heart of the everyday landscapes of Japanese people, calling for a counter-landscapism to reimagine a space for politics and the social.[22] Sono Shion goes one step further by staging this new cartography as a mythical conflict between the Land and the State, in the figure of the old Ono couple.

In a striking scene (Figure 1), Sono Shion shows us the arbitrariness of state power in the figure of officials dressed in white suits who, without explanation, establish a twenty-kilometer zone of security cutting across the town of the Ono and Suzuki families. This scene appeals to the audience's feelings of indignation and anger at the violent intrusion of the state in their everyday lives. But the state was already there, in the very design of their streets, paddy fields, and in the very patriarchal structure of the tree, the dying tree still standing in front of the Ono house. The monumentalism of those made-up fences shows us the practical impossibility of such strategies of containment, or rather, that their efficiency resides in their impact on population movements.

FIGURE 2. Layers of state cartography. *Kibō no Kuni*, dir. Sono Shion, DVD (Shōchiku, 2012).

Official and popular discourses about the danger of contamination by radiation from Fukushima have all tended to stress the possibility of controlling and containing the risk of contamination in a limited area. The area of containment specified varies, depending on the interests and anxieties, from just the twenty-kilometer area around Fukushima Daiichi, as argued by Prime Minister Abe Shinzō to promote the Tokyo Olympics of 2020, to the Fukushima prefecture, East Japan, Japan, and so on.[23] Whatever limits are put forward, the rhetoric of cartography has, as in the days of Chernobyl, tried to convince "us" that "they" are in trouble while we are left untouched. The rhetoric of cartography is based on a discriminatory logic encouraged by the Japanese government who currently enforces a policy of returning Fukushima refugees to their homeland to let them live there, secluded from the rest of Japan.[24] But we know that people move, that radiation crosses lines on the map, even those drawn by state officials. What this means, then, is that, despite its claims, the rhetoric of cartography is not so much about a logic of containment of health risks as about controlling the movements of the population according to a logic of place and fixed boundaries. This is where Sono Shion's politics become ambiguous, as he stages the rhetoric of cartography to both flirt with the desire for a return to the lost home of Japan and with the possibility of a planetary belonging, without seemingly committing to either.

THE RHETORIC OF CARTOGRAPHY IS NOT SO MUCH ABOUT A LOGIC OF CONTAINMENT OF HEALTH RISKS AS ABOUT CONTROLLING THE MOVEMENTS OF THE POPULATION ACCORDING TO A LOGIC OF PLACE AND FIXED BOUNDARIES.

On one hand, Sono presents his characters as loving their homeland and wanting to stay there (as do the old Ono couple) or wanting to return home after an exile that at first can only be accepted as temporary. This is the very discourse supported by the Japanese government, when in fact a good part of the population from the areas irradiated by the nuclear catastrophe do want to leave but cannot because they do not have the means, and the government has started to cut funding for refugee facilities outside of the Fukushima prefecture.[25] The Ono family structure is patriarchal, grounded in the father, and it is the father who enjoins his son and wife to leave. To leave means to leave the Nagashima home and the Japanese state, conflated in the figure of the old Ono father, and escape into an outside space uncontaminated by the radiation. But there is no outside to the poisonous atmosphere of Fukushima, as revealed in the last scene of the movie.

This is why the fences are shown from the beginning to be utterly useless.

The Ono mother, Chieko, is the first to want to cross the barrier, to take care of the abandoned Suzuki dog. When her husband argues ironically that the state will get angry, she answers by asking what is a state that does not let Japanese people freely move on Japanese soil. Sono Shion here uses the old couple to stage the dramaturgy of the Japanese nation-state as a domestic story. The Ono mother stands here for the Motherland and the Japanese nation. The Motherland nourishes the State, as shown by the image of the colorful flowers at the foot of the dying tree, and at the same time relies on a different logic, opposed to the everyday mode of control of the state. While the State is animated by what Michel Foucault has called a *biopolitics,* that is, the desire to control the population movement as expressed in the rhetoric of cartography, the Motherland opens a space of movement across physical and temporal borders. The old Ono parents are figures of the Japanese nation-state, and by dramatizing their essential difference, Sono opens a third possibility, the entrance into a planetary space.

The image and sound of the hammer repeatedly hitting the picket that fixes the new fence returns again and again as a challenge to the authority of the old Ono father, identified with the old tree withering away. The new fence separates the Suzuki and Ono families and metaphorically establishes an unbridgeable barrier (Figure 3) between the Ono parents, who will stay and die in a replay of the traditional love suicide, and their son and his wife, who will continue to live and move across *The Land of Hope.*[26] However, escape is not

FIGURE 3. Departures. *Kibō no Kuni,* dir. Sono Shion, DVD (Shōchiku, 2012).

possible anymore, as there is no outside to the planetary situation opened by the catastrophe.

Sono Shion here provocatively reverses the traditional love/suicide narrative. Rather than dying because of an irresolvable contradiction between personal passions (*ninjō*) and social obligations imposed by the state (*giri*), Sono Shion stages the fictional death of the nation-state, as if the Motherland and the State were already dead. The separation of the Motherland from the State, and their common death are the two moments that open onto a planetary situation. And as I will now argue, this implies a new temporality and a new relation with the land.

NECROPOLITICS: LIVING AFTER THE END OF HOPE

Let us go back once again to the question of radiation. The problem posed by nuclear radiation is that it radically disturbs our usual understanding of space and time. Radiation disrupts our sense of time, of a time moving forward on a straight line and oriented by an idea of progress. Radiation accumulates in the body at various speeds and disease is now defined in terms of thresholds and of environment. The concentration of radiation on the land varies over time as well, making any statist cartography of risk immediately outdated. Not only does radiation move at various speeds across lands and countries, it accumulates at irregular levels on the land, thus making it very complicated to map. Radiation is invisible, in both its material presence and its physical effects. It might as well not be here, and we might as well not worry. "Everybody wants to forget this dark feeling," says a woman interviewed in the movie. Let us forget, and buy, and eat, as good Japanese citizens.

This problem of visibility and invisibility is central to debates on the effects of nuclear radiation from the postwar era. Radiation is invisible and crosses human boundaries, which makes all illegal border crossings in the movie meaningless. It is not a subversive act to go into the contaminated area anymore, because there is no escape from contamination; the made-up fences are there only to trivialize this new reality. There is now only one naked land, the deserted landscapes of the planetary. At the same time, the invisibility of radiation is equated with the invisible gaze of the national citizen, the good Japanese, who does not want to see signs of danger, signs of the past tragedy, the citizen who wants to forget and live as if nothing had happened, in the dreamland of postwar Japan. When Izumi leaves the hospital after talking to other pregnant women about their fear of radiation, she sees the invisible

menace as a red cloud punctuated with firefly-like dots of light (Figure 4). In the countershot (Figure 5), this red cloud is reflected at the surface of her eyes, an internal menace that yet remains at the surface, exterior.

This image of radiation as poisonous *kūki* (atmosphere) is analogue to the invisible *kūki* of Japanese society, an imperative command to deny the new

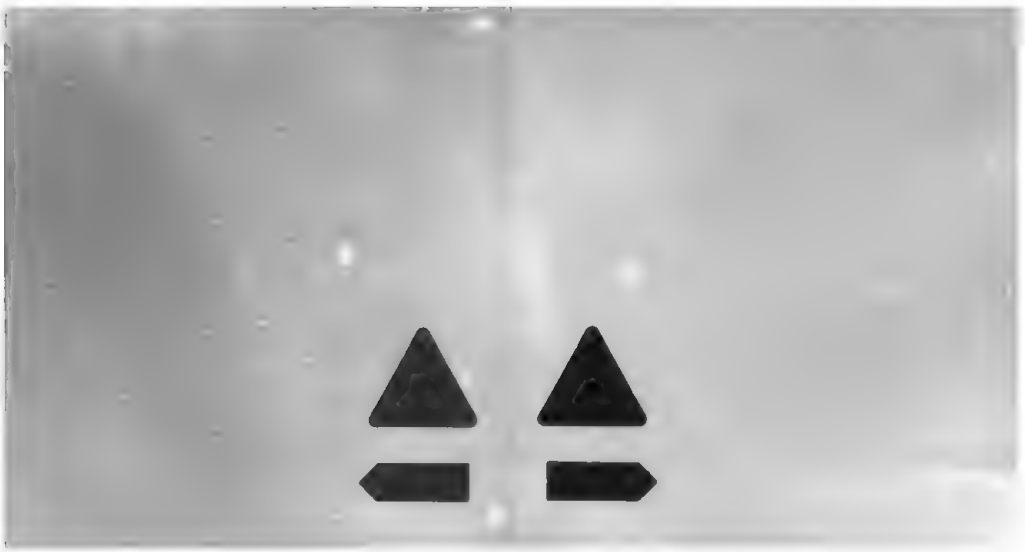


FIGURE 4. Toxic fireflies. *Kibō no Kuni,* dir. Sono Shion, DVD (Shōchiku, 2012).

FIGURE 5. In the gaze of the other. *Kibō no Kuni,* dir. Sono Shion, DVD (Shōchiku, 2012).

reality, the fact that there is no return to pre-Fukushima Japan. As the movie reminds us, this collective denial can only work by discriminating against people from the Nagashima area, separating them from the rest of the Japanese population. The Suzuki family are verbally attacked in the refuge where they take shelter, the Ono son and his wife are rejected by the gas station owner, and kids who fled from Nagashima are bullied by local kids. The rhetoric of cartography supports the logic of containment, the very same logic that attempts to isolate Fukushima from the rest of Japan, or that supported the decision of South Korean officials to ask travelers from Japan to go through a radiation detector in the aftermath of the catastrophe.[27]

I argue, then, that *The Land of Hope* enjoins us to imagine another kind of cartography, a countercartography, counter to the logic of control and containment of the state, what I call a planetary cartography. The temporality of nuclear radiation neutralizes both our conventional sense of a temporality of action following a linear movement of progress as well as a relation with the land based on control and possession. The countercartography proposed by Sono Shion relies on a new sense of time and place that he articulates around the two figures of the hysterical mother and the ghost child. The child and the woman have been commonly associated in modernity with a dangerous generative power that disturbs the linear narrative of progress.[28] This is why state biopolitics start in modernity with the domestication of the child and the woman through education policies for the purpose of national reproduction.[29] The mother's generative power is restricted to the reproduction of the national labor force and attached to the unique place of origin, the space of domesticity of the home, to conjure the hysterical movement of life as transformative power (hysteria becomes a pathology of the feminine in the normative order of modernity). Similarly, the domestication of the child means the repression of its spectral life, because it is of a temporal order essentially other to the nation-state, the order of the planetary.

Sono's view of women seems in that respect rather conventional. They are in touch with the land, are associated with animals, and are the first to react against the present conditions, to cross the barrier, and to reject the official discourse of safety. It is Izumi, the Ono son's pregnant wife, who leads the resistance against the national discourse of security, instructing herself by reading books, wearing a space suit in the supermarket (Figure 6), and doing all she can to protect her child from contamination. As we know, the movement against the use of nuclear plants has been led by Japanese mothers from Fukushima, in the name of children, in the name of the future of the nation.[30] Sono Shion seems, then, to reproduce this discourse of a feminist vanguard of

FIGURE 6. Shopping. *Kibō no Kuni*, dir. Sono Shion, DVD (Shōchiku, 2012).

mothers defending the future of the nation, their children, against the patriarchal state. However, as I suggested above, the mother in this movie takes a new, mythical dimension, detached from the paternal figure of the state, and opens a new spatio-temporal relation with the land.

The Ono mother, Chieko, now only lives in the memories of her youth, and forgets everything after ten minutes. She is caught in a temporal loop, unable to move forward, in fact unable to move in any direction. Lost as the abandoned cattle and domestic animals that roam the empty streets of her city (Figure 7), Chieko is suspended between the past and the future. At the same time, Chieko is clearly aware of the new reality, as if she knew that there is no possibility of "going back." So her madness and her anxiety to go back home are not delusional but rather show her awareness that a new time has come and that there is no return. Chieko is thus also the figure of a new planetary temporality characterized by a multiplicity of origins, each present moment being a new place of beginning or rather a suspension in the opening to the planetary.

The figure of the ghost child further articulates this new temporality in relation to place. In one of the last scenes of the movie, Mitsuru and Yoko return to the devastated Nagashima sea front and there encounter two elementary schoolchildren (Figure 8). These children, who came back to look for an old Beatles record in the ruins of their home, are ghosts of the future. Caught between the past and the future, they open the way toward a new time, a planetary time of nowness, beyond the state and the nation. In the

FIGURE 7. Lost mother. *Kibō no Kuni,* dir. Sono Shion, DVD (Shōchiku, 2012).

FIGURE 8. Ghost children. *Kibō no Kuni,* dir. Sono Shion, DVD (Shōchiku, 2012).

new planetary cartographies of Nagashima, there is only one deserted land, an open space of movement without exterior for a human population in exile. They tell Mitsuru and Yoko that they have to stop moving forward following a linear movement of progress, one step building on the other: one, two, three. Instead they say Japanese people now have to move *ippo ippo,* one step *and* one step, without knowing where this is leading them. Moving *ippo ippo*

means a complete embrace of the present, an acceptance of each present step as a full choice on which we nonetheless have no control, and of each chosen present as coming from the planetary.

The movie ends with the young Ono couple on a beach in an unknown place in what we suppose is South Japan. While Nagashima is covered with snow, the couple lies on a sunny beach. It is as if time has lost its cyclic rhythm, as if time does not flow regularly and instead changes according to places and atmospheres of places. In the planetary cartographies of *The Land of Hope,* the world has become a series of images, a series of empty landscapes traversed by a population in exile. This is, I think, what is life after the end of hope, after the end of the hope to ever return home, to return to the normal state of things, the dream of postwar Japanese society. In one of the last scenes, the young Ono couple realizes that radiation has also contaminated the South, that there is no escape from a world now entirely contaminated. This theme was already present in Kurosawa Akira's 1955 movie *I Live in Fear* (1955, *Ikimono no kiroku*).[31] Yet in contrast to Kurosawa's movie, *The Land of Hope* does not end in claustrophobia and despair. In *The Land of Hope,* we have become foreigners to our land, a population in exile without any hope or desire to return home. And this essential condition of exile grounds a new ethical relation to the land, as we accept living in a decaying world, to let it live as we keep being moved, *ippo, ippo.*

Notes

I would like to thank Cuz Potter and Jun Han San, who gave me the opportunity to present my initial ideas at Korea University, and Wendy Goldberg for her generous help in editing this article.

1. *Shinseiki evangerion,* dir. Anno Hideaki, TV series, 26 episodes (1995–96); translated as *Neon Genesis Evangelion: Perfect Collection,* 8-DVD box set (ADV Films, 2002). Tawada Yōko, "The Island of Eternal Life," trans. Margaret Mitsutani, in *March Was Made of Yarn,* eds. Elmer Luke and David Takashima (New York: Vintage Books, 2012), 3–12.

2. Rosi Braindotti, *The Posthuman* (Cambridge, U.K.: Policy Press, 2013).

3. Ursula K. Heise, *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet: The Environmental Imagination of the Global* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Death of a Discipline* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003).

4. *Jisatsu sākuru,* dir. Sono Shion (2001); translated as *Suicide Club,* DVD (TLA Releasing, 2003). *Noriko no shokutaku,* dir. Sono Shion (2001); translated as *Noriko's Dinner Table,* DVD (Tidepoint Pictures, 2005). *Ai no mukidashi,* dir. Sono Shion (2008); translated as *Love Exposure,* DVD (Olive Films, 2011).

5. As Sono remarks, his movie was not welcomed by Japanese producers, which forced him to find funding from other countries. Sono Shion, *Hidōni ikiru* (Live cruelly) (Tokyo: Asahi Shuppansha, 2012), 130.

6. *Himizu*, dir. Sono Shion (2011), DVD (Gaga Communications, 2012).

7. Rosi Braidotti, *The Posthuman* (Cambridge, U.K.: Polity Press, 2013).

8. Achille Mbembe, "Necropolitics," *Public Culture* 15, no. 1 (2003): 39–40.

9. Sasaki Ataru, "Kudakareta daichini, hitotsu no basho wo" (In the broken land, one place), in *Shisō toshite no 3,11* (3.11 as an idea) (Tokyo: Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 2011).

10. Todos somos Japón, "Japan—Fissures in the Planetary Apparatus," http://www.jfissures.org/.

11. Quoted in Kimura Saeko, *Shinsaigo bungakuron—atarashii nihon bungaku no tameni* (The literary discourse after Fukushima—for a new Japanese literature) (Tokyo: Seidosha, 2013), 155. Kimura explains that the use of ruined landscapes of the Tōhoku in *Himizu* were added to the original scenario after the catastrophe happened, without altering the original plot based on the Kotani Minoru's manga. Kotani Minoru, *Himizu* (Tokyo: Kōdansha Yangu Magajin, 2001–2003). She however positively assesses the effect of *Himizu* in criticizing mainstream discourses of national resilience and reconstruction. The arbitrary juxtaposition of earthquake landscapes and a well-known domestic drama of fratricide makes clear that nothing will change after 3.11, and that the "Ganbaru Nippon" slogan is a lie in the face of the Japanese.

12. Ōsawa Masachi, *Yume yori mo fukai kakusei he—3.11 go no tetsugaku* (For a deep awakening from the dream—philosophy after 3.11) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2012). For Ōsawa, it is possible to look at the 9/11 terrorist act and the earthquake and tsunami of 3.11 as two similar forms of catastrophe. In both cases, an external event suddenly comes to disrupt our everyday ground of experience (*chi*) to add a new layer to the map of the land (*zu*). On the contrary, the nuclear catastrophe disrupts our very ground of experience, the very planetary space in which we live.

13. Ursula K. Heise, *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet: The Environmental Imagination of the Global* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 10

14. Jean-Luc Nancy, *L'équivalence des catastrophes* (The equivalence of catastrophes) (Paris: Galilée, 2012).

15. Oguma Eiji, "The Hidden Face of Disaster: 3.11, the Historical Structure, and Future of Japan's Northeast," *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 9:31, no. 6, (2011): 6.

16. Ibid.

17. Takahashi Tetsuya, *Gisei no seido fukushima okinawa* (Fukushima, Okinawa—the system of sacrifice) (Tokyo: Shōei Shinshasho, 2012).

18. Oguma Eiji, "Japan's Nuclear Power and Anti-Nuclear Movement from a Socio-Historical Perspective," Berkeley Symposium towards Long-term Sustainability: In Response to the 3/11 Earthquake and the Fukushima Nuclear Disaster, http://ieas.berkeley.edu/events/2012events.html.

19. Oguma, "The Hidden Face of Disaster."

20. Igarashi Yoshikuni, *Bodies of Memory: Narratives of War in Postwar Japanese Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000). William Marotti, *Money, Trains, and Guillotines: Art and Revolution in 1960s Japan* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2013).

21. The expression is from Lauren Berlant, *Cruel Optimism* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2011).

22. *Ryakushō renzoku shasatsuma*, dir. Adachi Masao (1969). Furuhata Yuri, *Cinema of Actuality: Japanese Avant-Garde Filmmaking in the Season of Image Politics* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2013).

23. Kyodo, "Abe Claims Fukushima Radioactive Water Woes Are 'Under Control,'" *Japan Times,* October 16, 2013, http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2013/10/16/national/politics-diplomacy/abe-claims-fukushima-radioactive-water-woes-are-under-control/#.U4KnCK2Swb4.

24. Cécile Asanuma-Brice et Thierry Ribault, "Crime d'Etat à Fukushima: L'unique solution est la fuite," *Le Nouvel Observateur-Rue* 89 (July 2013), http://www.rue89.com/2013/07/03/crime-detat-a-fukushima-lunique-solution-est-fuite-243864. Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry, "For Accelerating the Reconstruction of Fukushima from the Nuclear Disaster—Major Points. Cabinet Decision on December 20, 2013," Japanese Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry website, http://www.meti.go.jp/english/earthquake/nuclear/roadmap/pdf/20140410_01.pdf.

25. Cécile Asanuma-Brice et Thierry Ribault, "Fukushima, une démocratie en souffrance," *Revue Outre terre-Revue Française de géopolitique* (2013). Martin Fackler, "Forced to Flee Radiation, Fearful Japanese Villagers Are Reluctant to Return," *New York Times,* April 27, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/28/world/asia/forced-to-flee-radiation-fearful-japanese-villagers-are-reluctant-to-return.html?src=twrhp&_r=2.

26. At the end of the movie, the Ono parents agree to commit suicide together, setting fire to their house, the flowers, and the tree. This double suicide is a tragic replay of conventional love narratives ending in a double suicide exemplified by Chikamatsu Monzaemon's (1653–1725) puppet play *Love Suicide at Sonezaki* (1703).

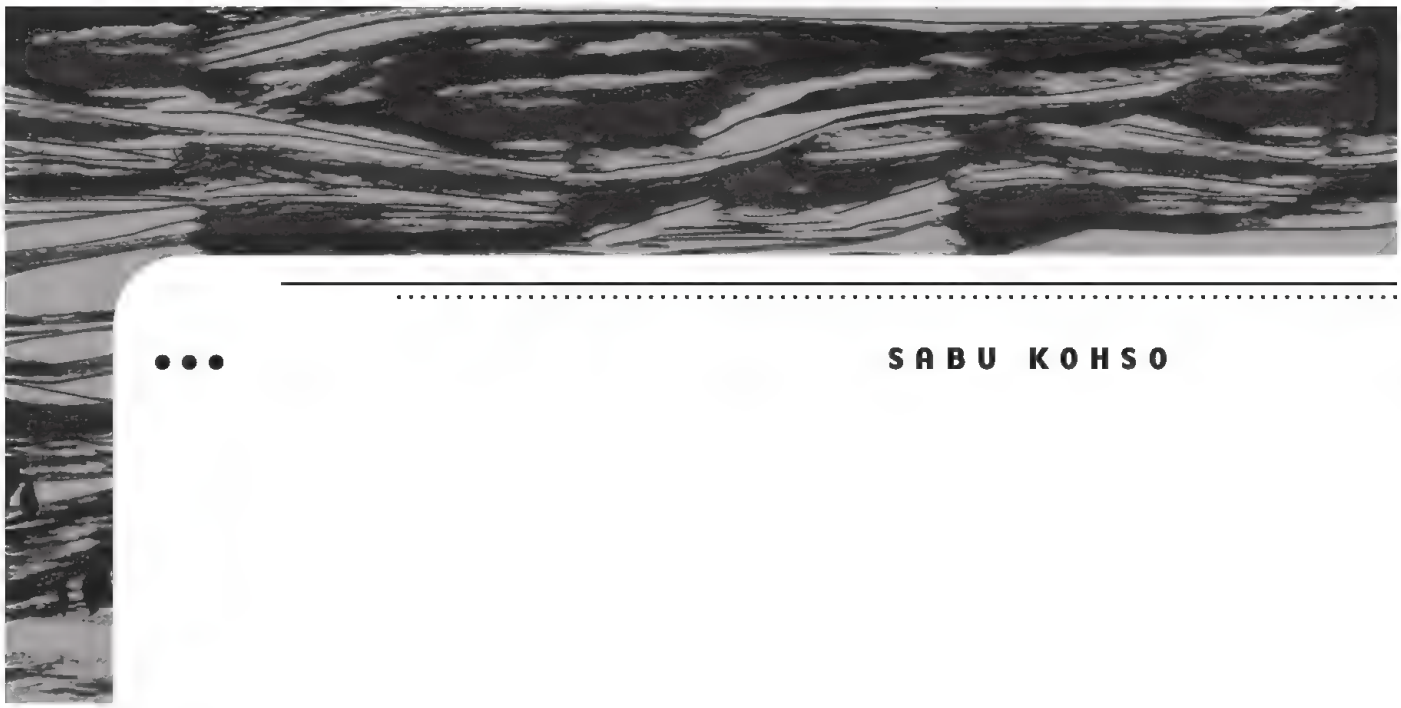
27. Personal communication with Professor Tom Gally (The University of Tokyo, Graduate School of Humanities and Sciences), July 2013.

28. Andreas Huyssen, "Mass Culture as Women: Modernism's Other," in *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 44–62.

29. Stephen Tanaka, "Childhood: Naturalization of Development into a Japanese Space," in *Cultures of Scholarship*, ed. Sarah C. Humphreys, 21–56 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997).

30. Yabu Shirō's work discusses at length the activism of women from the Tōhoku, which he aligns with the tradition of witches, in opposition to official medicine. Yabu Jirō, *3.12 no shisō* (The idea of 3.12) (Tokyo: Ibunsha, 2012).

31. *Ikimono no kiroku,* dir. Akira Kurosawa (1955); translated as *I Live in Fear,* DVD (Criterion, 2008).



SABU KOHSO

Tokyo Apparatus (Version 1.0)

I want to leave my home, or rather Japan.

—from an advertisement for an English language school posted on the Shinkansen

It is at work everywhere, functioning smoothly at times, at other times in fits and stirs. It breathes, it heats, it eats. It shits and fucks. What a mistake to have ever said the id. Everywhere it is machines—real ones, not figurative ones: machines driving other machines, machines being driven by other machines, with all the necessary couplings and connections. An organ-machine is plugged into an energy-source-machine: the one produces a flow that the other interrupts.

—Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*

The third person neuter "it" (*ça*) in the above epigraph of Deleuze and Guattari embodies an interaction among nameless energy/signal flows, where the becoming/production of "desire" takes place. What is desire? That is a big question. But the truth of desire is that, no matter how excessive, bizarre, violent, or divergent, it is producing another desire everywhere, operating substantially and ceaselessly. Desire is essentially ambiguous and heterogeneous: it is the main stage of drives for life activities, commodification

and control, even seduction to death, and also the motor drive of insurgency. In other words, it is a spectrum stretched between these multiple poles, and more. "Machines" in the sense of Deleuze and Guattari is equal to articulations in the process of production of and by desire.

Now the protagonist of the present article, Tokyo, is primarily a centralization and concentration of massive desire-productions and their institutionalization. It embodies the most effective and insidious way by which massive desire-productions are condensed into one location, and at the same time their limitless expansion takes place. Therefore, it would be better, for the sheer convenience of our present analyses of the metropolitan functions, to insert another concept—the "apparatus (*dispositif*)"—taken from a different lineage of thought by Michel Foucault, Giorgio Agamben, and *Tiqquun*, that is, for reconfirming an overwhelming presence of *the given* in front of us with respect to this monster called Tokyo. In this context, the apparatus as the given, said or unsaid, material or immaterial, is a mechanism of capturing desire-production, giving it substantial forms, making various machines: architectural machines, transportation machines, spectacle machines, etc., and congealing them into the apparatus. So it is that here the Tokyo metropolis is going to be seen not only as a geopolitical apparatus but also as the apparatus of apparatuses, consisting of captured machines, but from which nomadic machines of flight are becoming—as the battle between the forces of congealment and dispersion.

SO IT IS THAT HERE THE TOKYO METROPOLIS IS GOING TO BE SEEN NOT ONLY AS A GEOPOLITICAL APPARATUS BUT ALSO AS THE APPARATUS OF APPARATUSES, CONSISTING OF CAPTURED MACHINES, BUT FROM WHICH NOMADIC MACHINES OF FLIGHT ARE BECOMING—AS THE BATTLE BETWEEN THE FORCES OF CONGEALMENT AND DISPERSION.

THE COMMON DENOMINATOR OF THE STRUGGLES

Every time I visit Japan I am astonished by the endless multiplication of kinds of commodity. For instance, the impetus to reproduce the food culture never wanes, though radiation is undoubtedly contaminating products, especially those that originate in northeastern Honshu. As if seeking to offset the calamity, the production of desire by propagating subspecies and providing them with new and seductive images has consistently accelerated, and that is more evident in cheap street food such as ramen than in haute cuisine. The

equivalent acceleration of desire is taking place in every sector of production, from clothing to electronic supplies to medicines to cars to family homes. Meanwhile, at least in Tokyo, the reconstruction of space and extension of the transportation system never cease, moving toward a more convenient and more beautiful metropolis. The *shinkansen* (bullet train) arrives every ten minutes, *within seconds of its schedule,* to transport us most comfortably to either the northern or southern tip of the archipelago. But once we are on the train, our gaze does not necessarily pause on beautiful rural Japan but mostly on miserable landscapes filled with clusters of tiny homes that look like papier-mâché, where naked electric wires connect utility poles from block to block, to the end of the horizon. There are patches of small farmland here and there, many of which are unproductive, waiting to be sold as real estate commodity. It is likely that these homes are filled with new gadgets, fashionable clothes, sports bikes, and even cars, while the owners are in deep crisis with credit loans. The value of land in suburban townships of Tokyo, such as Mitaka and Musashino, has fallen drastically, with the owners bound to pay back loans on the valueless property for years to come. Family relations have long been crumbling, since the bubble of the mid-1990s burst, when many fathers lost their jobs and the patriarchal relation lost its material ground. Kids confine themselves to their tiny dens, their only private territory: that is the only place they can enjoy connecting themselves, by virtual means, with the outer world. Thus the catastrophic gap between the acceleration of desire-production and its deficit is everywhere, running across all existential territories of the people in varied dimensions and scales, from regional unevenness to class, race, and gender divisions, to individual minds and bodies that are more or less on the verge of collapse.

At present, three years have passed since the disaster. At the time, many of my friends predicted drastic change to the social order and way of life. But things seem to have gone in the opposite direction. A huge return of nationalism can be observed in the main media as well as in the social atmosphere, with exaggerated rhetoric praising and glorifying the national spirit, as if that were the only way to save the nation from decomposition. Undisguised xenophobia is expressed on the street with the rise of right-wing groups such as Zaitokukai (The Citizens Group That Will Not Forgive Special Privileges for Koreans in Japan), which draws on a mass desire for a naked antagonism against all East Asia. The new LDP (Liberal Democratic Party) administration is enjoying its unilateral leadership to drive the society toward market centrism, rearmament, a total control of the society, and creating a wealthy and strong nation—i.e., by implementing the TPP (Trans-Pacific Partnership),

Secret Protection Act, Right of Collective Self-defense, and the Tokyo Olympics 2020. What this drive embodies, with whatever reasoning it fabricates, is nothing other than the automatic self-reproduction and expansion of the axis of the apparatus: capital/nation-state conglomeration.

According to the thinker and activist Shiro Yabu, the antinuke movement has regressed since its heyday right after the disaster.[1] In the early stages of the protest, people took to the street with *screams* ("enough is enough!") and with their terror of radiation exposure. The actions at that time materialized the events that could open to unknown possibilities. But gradually, as the movement (led by the Metropolitan Coalition against Nukes) gained large mobilization and institutional popularity, which was its primary objective, the "antinuke" slogan became reductionist and the movement's actions began to follow a predetermined course. As the Hapax collective points out, with its objective to unify the masses, this movement now embodies an impetus to reinforce the existing social order, consisting of the apparatuses that shape up the nation-state.[2]

During the first two years after the disaster, a radiation-monitoring movement appeared and spread across Japan; it was an autonomous project to counter the blurring and veiling of information by the authorities. As if following the course of the pioneering German response after Chernobyl, however, this movement diminished as the doses of radiation fallout dropped to levels that Geiger counters available to civic organizations could no longer detect. Thus this practice has shifted to the food-awareness movement, which focuses on identifying the origins of production and developing appropriate ways of cooking. Meanwhile, voluntary evacuation has been slowly yet steadily growing. From Nagoya to southwestern Japan, increasing numbers of communities are struggling to build new lives in new environments. These movements are figuratively called "those who go West." And in contrast, there are "those who go North," consisting of activists who choose to go to Fukushima to help restore the living conditions of the people in the disaster-stricken areas.[3] Furthermore, though small, there have been attempts to organize the nuclear workers exposed to radiation from the crippled reactors.[4] These people choose to be irradiated in order to support the immediate victims and organize the most oppressed stratum of nuclear industries. These two orientations divide the substantial sector of post-Fukushima struggles outside the protest movement. Although in conflicting and opposing manners, they share a common denominator: Tokyo.

The struggles of "those who go North" are confronting the historically uneven development between metropolis and countryside, i.e., Tokyo and the

northeastern region of Honshu, where Fukushima is located. The countryside has been made to service Tokyo not only with its agricultural and marine products for food but also by offering electricity as its lifeline, and as a supply of disposable labor power (an industrial reserve army) for construction as well as for the nuclear industry. Now after the disaster, both capital's strategy and government policies are centered on preserving and expanding the metropolitan function of Tokyo, and for this objective precisely, priorities are binding the people to live and work in the contaminated areas in the northeast and speeding up the reconstruction there.

The struggles of "those who go West" are driven by their existential need to be away from radiation contamination and their desire to look for new values that are unaffected by the multitude of machines constituting the Tokyo apparatus. While moving away from it, they have begun to look for non-Tokyo-desire-machines, covering all existential territories from politics, culture, and everyday life. Therefore, both in and out of Tokyo, we hear increasing enunciations and discourses on Tokyo. Many now objectify Tokyo as a target to reject, forget, overcome, decompose, or destroy.

CATASTROPHIC URBANIZATION

Tokyo is material *and* immaterial. It is a particular locus and an expansive movement that affects the bodies and minds of the people residing across the archipelago and beyond, and that produces their desires and congeals them into its apparatus.

It is a place located in the vast Kanto Plain with rich natural resources that covers 17,000 square kilometers; it is an urban space that appeared in the crutch of Tokyo Bay where several rivers stream into the Pacific Ocean. The city was originally constructed as the capital of the Tokugawa regime—then called Edo, from 1603 on—and then enriched itself by a policy of absorbing the wealth of feudal domains, that is, by having feudal lords have their official residences both in their territory and in Edo. Edo lasted up until the Meiji Restoration (1867), when the feudal rule of the Tokugawa shogunate was replaced by the absolute monarchy under the emperor, who was then relocated from the older capital Kyoto. The regime change, which involved a series of wars, was orchestrated by domains in the south, such as Satsuma (in Kyushu) and Choshu (in Shikoku), that had long been able to preserve and strengthen military and economic might independently, thanks to being located far from Edo. The Meiji Restoration was responsible for the emergence

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of Japan as a modernized nation in the early twentieth century. By introducing models of governance, military, science, and technology from the modern nation-states in the West, it accelerated industrialization in Japan, which led to its rise as a military power by the year 1905, under the slogan "Enrich the country, strengthen the military." This was the initiation of Japanese imperialism. Since then, Tokyo has been considered the center of politics, culture, science, and all other disciplines that embody progress and power, while the Kansai area, including Osaka and Kyoto, has continued to represent the original, good old Japan. In this context, Tokyo as the apparatus made the national subjectivity of modern Japan.

With both Emperor's Palace and the central government, Tokyo has gradually developed a "kind of self-consciousness," as the center and leader of the entire territory.[5] The language used in the residential area of Tokyo's upper class—the Yamanote dialect—was assigned as the standard language, which was more authenticated, as the colloquial speaking machines were reduced to the apparatus of national language by grammartization, and the wide dissemination of it by textbooks and later by the media network of NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation). At the same time, the majority of main academic institutions were established, sometimes, in succession of private institutions. From the metropolis, the lines of transportation began to stretch outward. Capital investment was more and more concentrated there. Repeated waves of migration from the countryside streamed in, following the reform of the main taxation system from the annual rice tax to the land tax. The capital city became the door to global politics and economy. The development of Tokyo began to determine the course of the nation vis-à-vis global power contestations. Thus the exclusive consciousness of Tokyo was implanted in the minds of both metropolitan and countryside residents.

Tokyo, however, was never a well-planned, ordered urban space. Visitors are shocked to find that much of *residential Tokyo* actually resembles the low-rise, high-density habitats one normally associates with cities in the global south. Alongside the futuristic visage of *skyscraper Tokyo,* densely populated villages lie along rambling roads and alleys, haphazardly connecting main roads and boulevards, where mom-and-pop stores sell soap and sandals, innumerable small restaurants and bars provide street foods such as *oden, yakitori,*

okonomiyaki, ramen, and private homes double and triple. Once one gets lost in the labyrinth of such downtown residential areas, it is impossible to find an address one is seeking without asking for help from a local.

Tokyo covers only 3.5 percent of the entire territory of Japan but accommodates more than one fourth of the population. Two-thirds of the total capital is concentrated there. In this sense Tokyo is a movement of not only expansion but also condensation. It is the apparatus to gulp the desire-machines of the entire archipelago, at the same time as it expands its apparatuses to the external regions. Throughout its history this movement was dramatically accelerated and articulated, especially when triggered by catastrophic events.

The Great Kanto Earthquake in 1923 hit a large area of the Kanto Plain including the Tokyo metropolis and caused a hundred thousand deaths and innumerable missing persons. Then, amid the seismic calamity came a social atrocity: vigilantes captured and massacred many resident ethnic Koreans, some Chinese, as well as socialists, labor activists, and anarchists. The police and military played a leading role in this conduct. It is this affair that initiated the subsequent reconstruction of Tokyo. Furthermore, what materialized today's Tokyo metropolitan structure was yet another destruction, that is, by the massive U.S. bombardment during the Pacific War that flattened almost the entire urban space. The metropolis has always fed itself with catastrophes for its enlargement, renewal, and condensation.

Tokyo thus inscribes traces of the catastrophes materially and immaterially. They primarily appear as a substantially congealed unevenness between well-invested, redeveloped zones, and unplanned, piecemeal, and irregular zones: the former is roughly distributed to the central area and the upper town (Yamanote), that is, the government, finance, and wealthy residential zones, while the latter exists in downtown (Shita-machi) and peripheries, that is, the neighborhoods of the poorer populace or slums—such as Sanya, the day-workers' ghetto—and industrial zones. But in a micro-dimension, the unevenness spreads more or less everywhere across the urban territory, like a macular pattern, due to the absence of a thorough and clear zoning and the repeated catastrophes. After the calamities, in the poor and middle-class areas, it was always the residents who rebuilt their homes and most of their neighborhoods, without much government support. As Wajiro Kon (1888–1972), the pioneer of a branch of urban sociology called "Modernology *Kogen Gaku*," observed on the postdisaster housing in Tokyo: "the shacks, which were located amidst the burnt down city and lead the reconstruction from the disaster, are perpetual organs of the Metropolis."[6] Internalizing the self-generated organs omnipresently, the growth of Tokyo can never be

fully controlled. In a larger scheme, we also detect the unplanned growth of a number of satellite townships in peripheries, forming the constellation of the metropolis. I would consider this aspect of Tokyo, its self-generation, its becoming, as Tokyo machines. If so, Tokyo metropolis consists of two layers: machines and apparatuses. (In this light, the 1960s architectural movement Metabolism could be critically revisited.)

The immaterial traces of catastrophes are seen in the collective memory. That is to say, in a nation whose history inscribes the memories of periodic earthquakes, the total defeat of an all-front war that it had initiated, and the nuclear attacks at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, apocalyptic representations obsessively appeared as collective imaginaries in films, comics, anime, and literature as if people had been expecting the return of such a rupture. Though I cannot go into details in the present version (1.0), dystopian images in these works, which seem to be more or less taken from Tokyo experiences, embody a gap between the spectacular high-tech city and chaotic slums, and a biosocial mutation after the apocalyptic rupture, not to mention the class wars that generate the movement of collective corporeality, either toward condensation or dispersion.

Now under the effects of radiation, Tokyo apparatus is not only seeking to sustain its functions by tying the people of Fukushima to the irradiated land and conditioning its residents to continue their "normal lives" as if nothing had happened but also to reconstruct itself for the coming Tokyo Olympics 2020. This is a new kind of atrocity, which is already under way in the guise of constructing the national spectacle.[7] It is this Tokyo that is the Apparatus.

THE REAL ESTATE APPARATUS

Shiba Ryōtarō (1923–96), the prolific, popular, and conservative novelist, mostly known for his innumerable epics of Japanese historical figures, said in 1980 on the root of Japan's crisis:

> Since 1955, pathological symptoms have begun to appear in the land of Japan. But they have appeared simultaneously with other malignant symptoms affecting all aspects of the society, including individual morality. We were thus captured by their particular appearances and busy tackling them, and were mostly unaware of the fact that all root causes of the issues existed in the absurdity and ambiguity of land tenure.

> Unbelievable as it may be, in Japan all of the land has not yet been registered as title deeds. It is well known that more than 70 percent of the territory is occupied by mountains and forests, most of which have not been surveyed. Even the records used in government offices are based upon measurements taken by eye, these having existed since the Edo period or even before. . . .
>
> The most extensive land survey was the one conducted by Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537–1598) during the 1590s, which was the biggest among his projects and is marvelously large and accurate even by today's standards. However, the object of survey was limited to agricultural lands, which were only about 20 percent of the territory, leaving mountains and forests alone, as they were untaxable.
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> The Meiji Restoration came, but even in this time of drastic transformation, mountains and forests were left out, and no new land policy was instigated. Thereafter during the Land Reform by the U.S. Occupation Army after the Defeat (1945), it was only the ownership of farming land that was evened out. The entire scheme remains even today as continuation from the original status established by Hideyoshi's survey in the late sixteenth century.
>
> Heated capital investment by enterprises began around the mid-1950s; it seemed like an uncontrolled competition among the companies within the same industrial sectors rather than a precisely planned capitalist project. This situation was never reflected upon critically even after a problematic phase arose due to the rise in property value of the lands acquired for factory sites, which was considered as achievements of the executives, rather than the success of their industrial investments. . . . [S]uch stimulation largely changed the economic mindset of the Japanese, resulting in an atmosphere where the entire population came to behave like real estate brokers.[8]

In other words, the desires of the nation were concentrated on the land as property, captured as they were by the real estate apparatus. Shiba's view was based upon faith in "good capitalism" that is based upon "healthy production" and a fair taxation on the land by the state. In other words, he believed in the national ownership of land in order to realize a production-based capitalism. He did not see the primitive process of capital's accumulation that severs the land and the people, time and again, in different critical junctures, as well as the inevitability of Japanese enterprises having to rely on bank loans secured by their property, in order to sustain their "healthy production" and win competition in the global market. The crux of the matter was not the problem of capitalist morality but their desperate strategy for survival and expansion.

Nonetheless he provided his interesting discovery about the missing link in the land survey—mountains and forests—that ended up being the target of reckless investment and development across the archipelago during the postwar reconstruction of the economy. Thus in Japan the main commodity that determines the value of all commodities has become land. In this climate, most farmers were forced to consider as their main commodity their farmland, no longer the agricultural products they produce.

In postwar Japan, there were two significant policies based on land: one that provoked the Tokyo-ization of Japan and another that focused the Japan-ization of Tokyo. The former was "A Plan for Remodeling the Japanese Archipelago" by Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei in 1972.[9] The objective was to diffuse the flow of humans and money from big cities to the countryside by way of facilitating the redistribution of industries and a national network of transportation and information. This enterprise was responsible for initiating the transformation of the landscape toward its homogenization on the one hand, and the maximal provocation of tourist desire on the other—which still sustains Japan's intraterritorial commodification. The latter was the Fourth Comprehensive National Development Plan by another prime minister, Nakasone Yasuhiro, in 1987.[10] This was a two-pronged plan: the basic slogan was a "formation of multipolar, dispersed territory," but at the same time, it defined Tokyo as one of the core cities of the world, with its superior function for distribution of information and development of the global economy. In consequence, it came to promote a massive concentration of capital for the development of the Tokyo Bay area. This latter initiated the increase of Tokyo population, or rather "one point concentration in Tokyo," during the 1990s. Certainly, this tendency went along with the massive privatization of state institutions and the dramatic increase of informal workers roaming the streets of Tokyo.

Since then, the Tokyo apparatus has been continually reinforced. To name but a few projects: the Tokyo Bay Aqua-line, a bridge-tunnel combination, connects two major industrial zones that used to be separated on the opposite shores of Tokyo Bay—Kawasaki City in Kanagawa Prefecture and Kisarazu City in Chiba Prefecture; Tokyo Skytree, the tallest structure in Japan, hosts broadcasting, a restaurant, and observation tower, *and* is located in the quintessential downtown area, where Edo/Tokyo commoners used to live in their "perpetual organs" since the Edo period. Meanwhile, the project is being planned to construct the Tokyo Gaikan Expressway, an underground highway network that will vertically connect the existing highways that function as arteries of the Tokyo metropolis.[11]

The devastating situation after Fukushima notwithstanding, the annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank took place nowhere but in Tokyo in October 2012. In fact, these were relocated from the originally designated city, Cairo. All in all, it was the struggle of the Egyptian people that ousted the global finance manipulators. Meanwhile Japan is one of the main economic forces for promoting the global financial operations. And one of their schemes in choosing Tokyo was evidently to fog up the severity of the present devastation by staging praise for the nonexistent success of recovery from the disaster.[12] By blindfolding themselves to the deadly situation, the IMF and the WB became worldwide promoters of the most *outrageous and impossible* project to reconstruct the radioactive zones for the benefit of U.S./Japan business interests, and on the bottom line, of the desperate need for sustaining as long as it could the metropolitan functions of Tokyo and its neighboring areas in the Kanto Plain. From Cairo to Tokyo, they shifted their priorities from oppression of the Egyptian revolution to their present need to reorganize the investment in reconstructing the post–nuclear disaster lands and managing a population living under radiation.

The first annual meetings took place in Tokyo in 1964, the year of the first Tokyo Olympics. The slogan was "to promote Japan to the world and one of the driving forces behind Japan's post-war new start." This time around, to show the world Japan's strong recovery following the devastating earthquake. Both times, the rhetoric emphasized successful recovery and the underlying economic and technological power of the nation. Omitted completely were the real sufferings and struggles of the people. Recovery in the proper sense is questionable in both cases, not to mention the worsening nuclear devastation from which no recovery is in sight, the wounds from World War II have never healed without an acknowledgment of the war crimes and a full compensation for all the victims by the Japanese government. Lurking behind here is a desperate need for "reconstruction" for the profit of the global enterprises and financial order. It is this automatic mechanism for reconstructing the Tokyo apparatus that is ultimately responsible for letting the multitude be exposed to radiation.

TOKYO OLYMPICS 2020

In order to think of contemporary Olympics in terms of "spectacle" we could return to Guy Debord, especially to his third and last category "the integrated spectacle," conceptualized in 1988.[13] It embodies the elements of both of his

earlier categories: "the diffuse spectacle" operating in the society of commodity economy, whose order word is "buy!" and "the concentrated spectacle" epitomized in the totalitarian society, whose order word is "obey!" On the surface, the third looks like the diffuse spectacle that captures our desires by commodity form, which nevertheless is based on the "occulted state," where the power is actually concentrated, while becoming more and more opaque. In the society of the integrated spectacle, which is very much like our own, the order words: "buy!" and "obey!" are interchangeable.[14] In this manner, as the concentrated form of the integrated spectacle, contemporary Olympics have been realized by maximally coupling the strategy of spectacle that seduces desire of the masses with the logistics of the state that exercises coercive development.

ALL IN ALL, THE OLYMPICS ARE, LIKE WAR OR NUCLEAR POWER, THE MOST EFFECTIVE MEANS TO UNIFY THE STATE POWER AND CAPITALIST COMMODITY ECONOMY, THEREBY TO RULE/CONTROL THE SOCIETY.

In another context, according to Deleuze and Guattari's distinction between the city and the state, the Olympics seems to be an ideal method for the state as "intraconsistency" to capture the city as "transconsistency" in its concentrated order, and combine commodification and nationalization.[15] In other words, it is the most effective means to congeal desire-machines in the city into the state apparatus. When that happens, transconsistency of the city, expansive beyond the national border, is subordinated to the confinement of state policy. All in all, the Olympics are, like war or nuclear power, the most effective means to unify the state power and capitalist commodity economy, thereby to rule/control the society.

When Tokyo was chosen as host for the 2020 Olympics, there were not many in and out of Japan who were not dumbfounded—that is, by the fact that the international society approved the unprecedented match between radiation contamination and the international festival of sports. It was always easy for many to predict that the Japanese Prime Minister Abe would tell a lie about the "possibility of controlling the crippled reactors," but it was a decisive lesson for us to learn that the IOC (International Olympic Committee), the organization that is supposed to represent international society, would approve a condition where humans in the near future would be more or less exposed to radiation. Nonetheless, even though that might have been known to us, on a deeper level *was* a sense of *déjà connu* in this, too.

The choice of Tokyo by the IOC has to do with "what a nuclear disaster merely is" to global capitalism and the state. The fixed capital called *nuclear reactor* breaks down, becomes uncontrollable and continues to release the

decommodified energy source called *nuclear fission,* which is now spreading across the planet following invisible complexity consisting of atmospheric movements as well as social circulations. This situation must be an unmanageable calamity for both capital's self-reproduction and state's social management. Unpredictable loss is expected for both material and labor power. The future of demography, too, is critical. Thus there is no other way than adopting all possible temporary measures on the one hand, and hiding the catastrophic reality as much as possible on the other. The priority, in any event, is to protect the social production of northeastern Japan and Tokyo, at least until the critical situation can be reoriented toward redevelopment and placed in the circulation of commodity production—i.e., by making northeastern Honshu a restricted zone for reprocessing nuclear wastes for global nuclear industries(?); or by developing new medicines for reducing and postponing the effects of radiation to human bodies(?); or . . .

The principle persistent in this operation does not involve any subjective judgment based on the individual, class, gender, race, etc. What drives it is the apparatus of intertwined mechanisms for pursuing interests or capturing heterogeneous desires. Its priority is in fact neither liquidation of disaster nor people's health but continuation of self-reproduction and expansion, and finally, continuation of preventing real estate values from falling. The Japanese government instigates new policies for supporting capital's strategies of reproduction so that they are realized as smoothly as possible. In this precise sense, protecting and supporting the metropolitan functions of Tokyo is the crux. And it is Tokyo Olympics 2020 that provides the best instance possible for this objective. By orienting the desires of the masses toward the construction of the megaspectacle that would inspire and reunite the national spirit, it must be possible to oppose the unsolvable and unconcealable nuclear disaster and radiation contamination—that is by the logistics of reconstructing metropolitan infrastructure and function, recapturing information networks and media, and completing the security system. This development as *salto moratle* is motivated also by the need to survive the interminable disaster/pollution that has become a "hyperobject," which might be possible by making Tokyo a megacommodity or megafetish with megaarchitectures and a megatransportation/information network, so that it would *look like* a hyperobject in its own way.[16] The state of Japan and the Tokyo municipal government are in total coordination for polishing the logistics for that purpose, especially after the recent election of the LDP mayor Masuzoe in February 2014.

Meanwhile, the IOC's choice of Tokyo has made us realize that the so-called international society is nothing more than a stage of negotiation for

global capitalism and states to divide and share the wealth of the planet, and that its priority now is to keep and enhance Tokyo's metropolitan functions. The event called the Olympics, which would attract many of us by its disciplined physical performances and grandiose spectacles of advanced media technology, cannot be thought of, irrespective of capital's strategy and the state's logistics for overcoming the disaster.

For their part, for the local residents of host cities, always inscribed in the Olympic experience has been the separation of people from the land in the process of a reconstruction of infrastructure such as building new facilities as well as new transportation and information networks, the reinforcement of security, and the destruction of means of subsistence due to all these. As *Endnotes* points out,

> The initial separation of people from the land, once achieved, is never enough. It has to be perpetually repeated in order for capital and "free" labor to meet in the market time after time. On the one hand, capital requires, already present in the labor market, a mass of people lacking direct access to means of production, looking to exchange work for wages. On the other hand, it requires, already present in the commodity market, a mass of people who have already acquired wages, looking to exchange their money for goods.[17]

For every host city, the Olympics have provided the most effective opportunity to realize the original process of accumulation on a bigger and bigger scale, a faster and faster speed, and a denser and denser concentration, which process, however, has to leave the desire to buy to those who will be severed from their land and subsistence.

Looking at the Olympics historically, each one has embodied the elements of either "the concentrated spectacle" (as in Berlin 1936) or "the diffuse spectacle" (as in Los Angeles 1984), but today, as evident especially in Athens 2004, the tendency has been inclining toward "the integrated spectacle" through and through.[18] In consequence, there seems to be no other outcome other than economic collapse, after hosting the transient event of this magnitude. Furthermore, at the moment what we are observing in Rio de Janeiro, being redeveloped for the World Cup 2014 as well as the Olympics 2016, is a violent removal of the people living in *favelas*, both by the rise of land prices and the physical intervention of the security forces.

In Tokyo, homeless people living in the parks of central Tokyo have already been threatened to make way for the construction of the new stadium.

The residents of a municipally owned apartment complex Tsuyugaoka Apartment are in danger of losing their homes.[19] Meanwhile, the majority of people in Japan predict and fear the end of the age when they receive retirement money and bonuses. Along with the effects of the Fukushima disaster and the primitive accumulation accompanying the redevelopment for the 2020 Olympics, "Abenomics" will make the people and especially Tokyo residents realize that they are nothing but "disposable machines." By focusing on raising employment rates, largely by introducing work sharing, it will make the entire working populace dayworkers. Many people expect to be exploited by overwork at an early age. As it repeats, the process of primitive accumulation becomes larger, faster, and denser, and new conditions of labor will be affected accordingly. We might as well give up the term "humans" and insist on "machines" or "commodities" *in the literal sense*. For the apparatus, we are just brains/thinking machines to be connected with the calculating and informational machines; we are just flesh that happens to have life activities to be made into its disposable parts rather than food; we are just parts of its mechanism. When we are out of order, either we become consumers/buying machines for repair businesses/machines or else are discarded in the gutter. This is precisely the situation confronted by the desire-machines captured by the Tokyo apparatus, waiting for the Olympics 2020.

WHEN WE ARE OUT OF ORDER, EITHER WE BECOME CONSUMERS/BUYING MACHINES FOR REPAIR BUSINESSES/ MACHINES OR ELSE ARE DISCARDED IN THE GUTTER.

DETERRITORIALIZATION OF THE TOKYO APPARATUS

Tokyo Olympics 2020 will be moving ahead toward fully realizing the integrated spectacle. As seen on Japanese TV and media reports during the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, it will be eulogized and blessed by words of praise and admiration that would inspire and provoke national spirit, in order to swallow and recycle the interminable nuclear disaster and expanding radiation contamination. But finally we stand still at this juncture—in confrontation with this decisive fact: radiation contamination can never be recycled; it can never be spectacularized. Nuclear fission is a pure event and an absolute antispectacle. Ironically, here exists the only moment to confront the Tokyo Olympics 2020.

In the years before 2020, there will be various projects to oppose the Olympics in Japan. From protest, to sabotage, to disruption, all options must be taken into consideration. But at the core there must exist strategies, tactics, logistics, and techniques vis-à-vis the Tokyo apparatus, which has long been forcibly unifying the far eastern archipelago, where heterogeneous Asia has always existed, into an insular nation for a homogeneous race called Japanese, by pushing a series of logistics for the self-reproduction and expansion of the capital/state conglomeration: the apparatus. After Fukushima, the apparatus has begun to shamelessly reveal the forms of its operation to capture and entangle the land and our desires into its mechanism. To deterritorialize the Tokyo apparatus and disassemble it into various machines of desire would be the basis for the struggle to confront the Olympics.

At the moment there are two strategies to accomplish this: one of information and one of cartography. First, it is necessary to circulate the reality of the radiation contamination of the Tokyo metropolis, in every possible form of information, to the world. Based on our existential dread of radiation, we must develop *an information war* against the apparatus of the spectacle in the full sense. At the same time, it is necessary to destroy the ocular machine implanted in all of us that makes us passively consume the spectacle in our living room. The objective is to create a countercurrent for the entire world to problematize Tokyo and stop going there.

Shiro Yabu said, "Fukushima has changed the geo-political measurement of all problematics in our mind. The divisions by prefectures are annulled now. In consideration with the distribution and dynamic of radioactive substances, now all areas from northeastern Honshu to the Kanto Plain must be deemed Fukushima."[20] That is to say, from the vantage of our informational strategy in counter to the spectacle of the apparatus, Tokyo is part of Fukushima, rather than Fukushima being part of, or subordinated to, Tokyo. If so, it is necessary to forget Tokyo in an active manner.

TO DETERRITORIALIZE THE TOKYO APPARATUS AND DISASSEMBLE IT INTO VARIOUS MACHINES OF DESIRE WOULD BE THE BASIS FOR THE STRUGGLE TO CONFRONT THE OLYMPICS.

Gradually and steadily, a second strategic possibility, a cartography of the new alliance of evacuees, has been formed—from Nagoya as the frontline, through Kansai and Chugoku regions, to Fukuoka as the base, and seems to be expanding further to connect cities in East Asia such as Seoul, Naha, Taipe, and so on. De-Tokyoization of the archipelago could be substantialized by way of this movement, driven by the desires to develop life-forms outside the Tokyo apparatus.

We have been too much cherishing our love/hate relationship with Tokyo, and for a long time, during the three hundred years of Edo period, after the Meiji Restoration, through the Great Kanto Earthquake, to the defeat of the Pacific War, but now after the Fukushima Disaster, we can say that it is over. Now it is high time to begin our project to deterritorialize the Tokyo apparatus, by redeveloping the archipelagic machine in counter to the insular apparatus. So it is imperative to nurture techniques of forgetting Tokyo, to live outside the territoriality of the Tokyo apparatus, in both material and immaterial senses.

Whether living in Tokyo or outside, finally, we should be able to develop de-Tokyo-ization. That would be a substantial part of antinuke, anticapitalist, and anti–global spectacle, and antiapparatus struggles of the planet.

Notes

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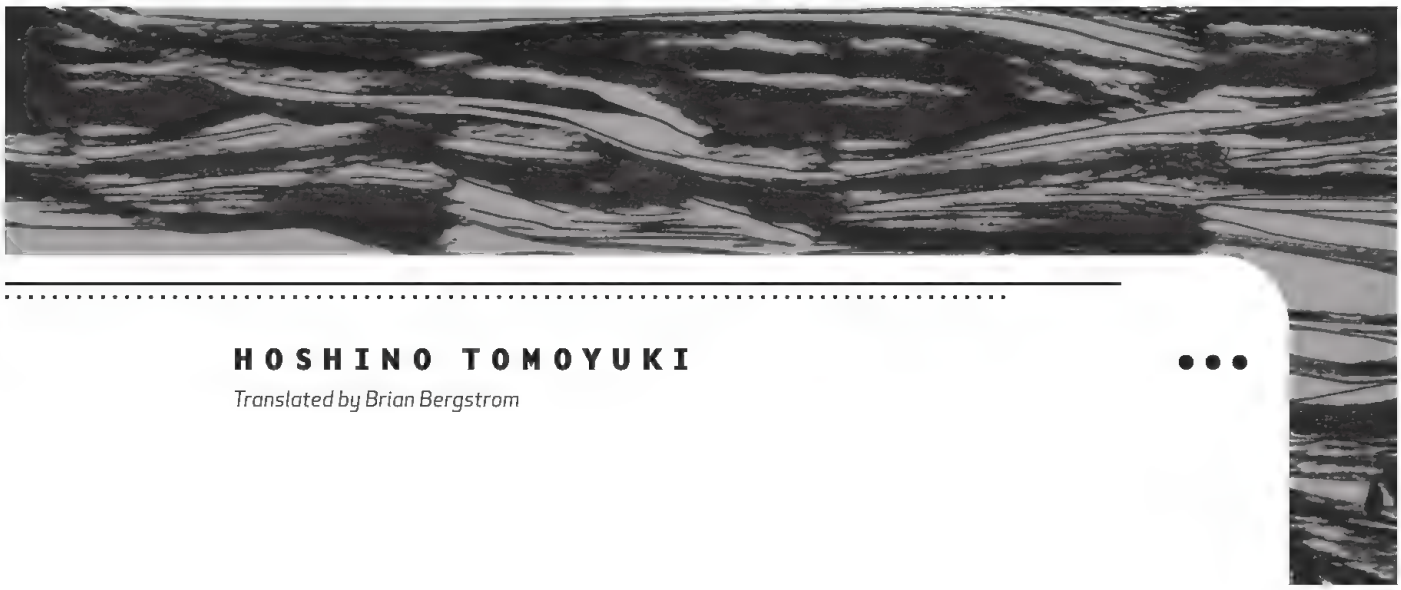


HOSHINO TOMOYUKI

Translated by Brian Bergstrom

Good Morning: A Postdisaster Palm-of-the-Hand Story

That night, I was tired in a way I'd never been tired before. I was so tired my very flesh seemed too heavy a burden to bear. I wanted to shed myself, throw myself away.

I knew it was an exhaustion that had built up over time. I'd rest and rest, but still it would accumulate. My very existence was its source, so there was no escape.

I didn't feel like doing anything—I was hungry and knew I should eat, but I didn't make dinner and instead just sat listlessly at the table. I'd always sat at the table when I was tired, but this time, sitting at it like this, knowing that from now on I'd only ever sit at it alone, it seemed to spread uselessly in all directions, leeching my vitality. Weighed down by fatigue, I'd pick up around the house but it would still seem cluttered and unkempt; I'd clean, but the mud and smell of rot seemed never to disappear.

The sunset that should have bathed the room in glowing red had at some point sunk away, leaving only darkness. Its afterglow was absent even from the window facing west, and it was as dark and quiet as the bottom of the sea. How long had I been sitting here?

Right then, there appeared a tiny light outside the window, traveling

right to left, glowing the pale yellow of a baby chick. In that moment, my heart leapt and raced within my chest. I rose from my seat and stood at the window.

Another light appeared. I looked to my right, the direction from which it had come, and saw a line of small, eggshell-colored lights moving in a procession. They twisted and turned in gentle curves, like a snake festooned with bulbs.

It was a procession of the dead!

Fighting to keep my sudden high spirits in check, I walked cautiously out the front of the house. My neighbors had warned me that the souls of the dead sometimes came back. I'd never seen anything of the sort myself, but I'd nonetheless always sensed their presence and believed the rumors. And now, finally, I'd get to meet them!

The lights turned out to be egg-shaped lanterns roughly the size of my head, drifting along like fireflies about chest-high.

I approached the lights and said my name aloud to identify myself. I called out—"Hiroshi? Masayuki? Itsumi?"—but no one answered. The lights just kept moving, unperturbed.

Take me with you, I thought feverishly. *This isn't where I belong, it's not right that I'm the only one left here, please take me with you, take me where I know I'm meant to be.* Gripped by an intense impulse, I slipped into the space between two lanterns and began to walk, keeping pace with the procession.

It was an extraordinary feeling. The streets were laid out to intersect at right angles like the grid of a *Go* board, yet the lights meandered independent of them, taking me along too, despite the ground still supposedly beneath my feet. The night was jet black, and all I could see was the lantern bobbing before me; it was too faint to illuminate anything else, and I followed it as if it were pulling me along by the hand.

Perhaps because my eyes were gradually adjusting to the faint illumination, I began to see that the egg-shaped lanterns were carried by dark figures, shadowy as the *kuroko* who manipulate *bunraku* puppets. The figure before me was small, like a child. Looking behind me, I found myself staring into the eyes of a young woman who looked slightly older than me. Her face, lit by the ivory illumination of the lanterns, stirred a feeling of nostalgia within me even though I didn't recognize it. Her expression remained unchanged as I looked at her, yet I felt nothing unwelcoming in her demeanor. Thus reassured it was all right to have joined the procession, I returned my gaze forward.

Our faintly glowing parade crested a small hill, and I sucked in my breath. There before my eyes spread a wide, shining swath of beige light. In places

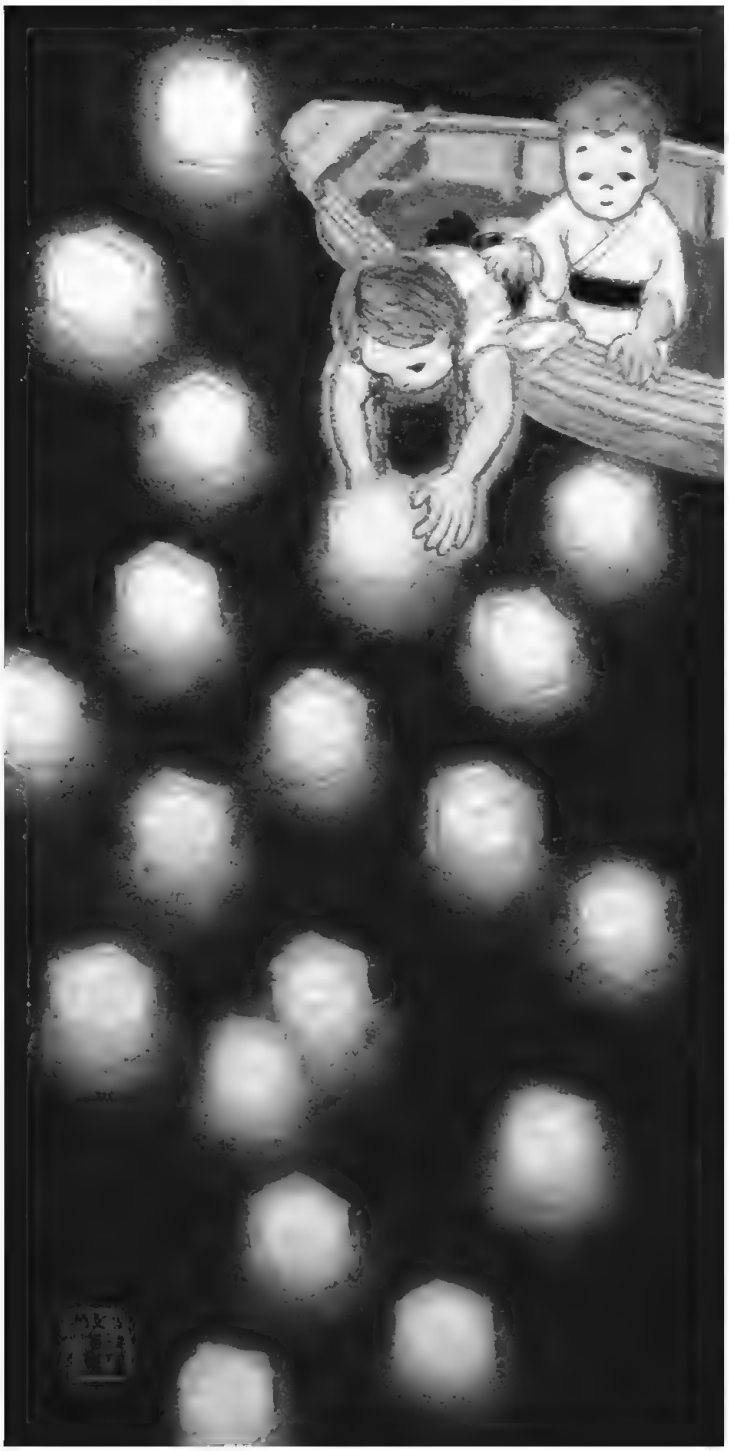


FIGURE 1. Iwamura Eiki, "Tōrōnagashi/Lantern" (2011) Reprinted with permission.

where the light was especially intense, the lanterns seemed to melt indistinguishably into one another, flowing together into a great river of light. It was like the Milky Way on a clear and starry night. A night like the one I'd stared up at with Hiroshi and Masayuki and Itsumi so many years before, when we'd gone camping together up on Mount Iwate.

The river of light that looked like the Milky Way was, in fact, a literal river. When a procession would reach the riverside, these lanterns that glowed the pale yellow of baby chicks were lowered to float upon the surface of the water. The egg-shaped lanterns drifted downstream, pulled by the leisurely current at about walking speed. Processions were arriving from all over to release lanterns at the shore, and the river's entire surface shone with their soft glow.

Hiroshi and Masayuki and Itsumi must have melted into that light, and now surely I will too—we can spend eternity together in the peaceful village that must await us somewhere downstream, I thought, and as I did, I felt the exhaustion that had gripped my body for so long loosen at last and fade away.

The procession I walked within reached the riverside. The child in front of me knelt to release a lantern into the river's flow. The lantern floated in place for a second, as if hesitating, and then slowly began to drift downstream.

Now it was my turn. But I carried no lantern. My soul could not become one with those of the dead. At a loss as to what to do, I turned back again to face the woman behind me.

The woman was kneeling down. Her face, illuminated by the soft, egg-shaped light, seemed to smile a little. And then she pushed me, gently. Her face began to recede into the distance.

I was atop the water. I was what was floating along, pulled by the current. I was a lantern. I gazed out from within its light; I was egg-shaped, a burning flame. Realizing that I was released from my pain and could join the others now at last, I felt joy burst forth from deep within me and my light grow even brighter.

Content in the knowledge that I was allowed to join my fiery fellows, I relaxed and let the current take me. The river flowed in leisurely curves through the creases between the mountains, growing wider as more water flowed into it, and brighter, too, as more lanterns floated in atop the water, setting the sky above ablaze.

And then, as I floated through the final gap between the mountains, my eyes filled with a great flood of dazzling light.

I'd reached the sea. All the lanterns floating down all the rivers had found each other and now bobbed here together. River after river flowed into the sea, transforming its surface into an endless field of light. It lit up the sky with

warm light the color of baby chicks until it shone brighter than midday. The sea had become the sun.

How beautiful it was! I was filled with happiness at the prospect of taking my place within it. I was moved to see the souls of the dead, released from the pain of living, shine so bright and pure; tears fell from my eyes at the prospect of such a sweet reward.

But as they did, a voice within my head spoke sternly, dampening my rush of emotion: "You've gotten it wrong." *Wrong?* I thought. *How have I gotten it wrong?* And the voice within my head said, "These are forms of you, not us." I absently recalled the shadowed woman who'd delivered me here as a lantern.

Forms of us? I asked.

Yes. To burn like that, to shine so bright, one must possess the flame of life.

So these lanterns aren't the souls of the dead? I'm not allowed to join them after all?

When the time comes, you will. But now is not that time.

And who are you?

Our role is to protect the flames of life, to make sure they never go out.

But I just want to rest. I am so very tired.

That's why we do this, to make your weakened flame burn strong again. Look. Look at the beauty of all this light. It's beautiful because you're alive. You shine. So we continue to do our part to fan these flames. As long as you still feel their beauty, you'll be all right. We'll be with you always. When you weaken, we'll make you strong again. And when the time finally does come for you to join us, you will take your place by our side to help keep the flames of others burning.

And with that, I felt the voice slip away and leave my head.

My heart trembled in my chest. I no longer felt so alone. Rather, Hiroshi and Masayuki and Itsumi and all the others were here with me, keeping my flame alight. I could imagine them so clearly, as if they were right before my eyes, carrying lanterns to the riverside to float upon the water.

The sea was upon me. As I floated into it, I felt myself melt into the vast expanse of its light. The dazzle filled my vision as my body's edges blurred. And I remember thinking, *That's okay. I'll be all right.*

Harsh light struck my eyes, forcing them open. Bright rays from the newly risen sun were falling on my face. Raising a hand to block them, I sat up and looked around.

I was at the seashore. All around me lay others who, like me, seemed to have collapsed here and fallen asleep. They too were awakening, opening their eyes to the morning sun.

Vast emotions filled me to bursting. There was some sadness in my heart, but it was packed into a thick layer of joy.

My eyes met those of an older woman just waking up beside me. I couldn't recall her name, but I recognized her from the gymnasium where we'd had to take shelter for so long.

We smiled at each other. Her eyes overflowed with light the color of baby chicks, the same as that of the lanterns. We exchanged words.

"Good morning," we said.

Positions of What If

ANDREA HORBINSKI

Record of Dying Days: The Alternate History of *Ōoku*

The past is a foreign country; they do things differently there.

—L. P. Hartley, *The Go-Between*

The question "How did things end up like this?" is a form of historical inquiry at its most elemental. One possible answer to this question may be afforded by the work of professional historians, who, in the course of investigating the events of the past and how things changed in a given period of time, adumbrate potential alternatives that were then, through the ratcheting process of the passage of time's arrow, reduced from viable futures to might-have-beens. Another possible answer to this question, however, comes from the popular narratives of science fiction, and in particular the subgenre of science fiction called alternate history.[1]

Although often dismissed as "genre writing," inherently of less artistic merit than so-called "literary fiction," science fiction is a global mode of storytelling whose cultural significance and appeal are indisputable. Science fiction is arguably even more popular in Japan than in the United States: beyond science fiction including novels, short stories, and light novels, the narratives of the anime, manga, and video games that are part of the core of Japanese

popular culture are imbued with countless science fictional or fantastical tropes, plots, and storytelling devices, symbolized by the mobilesuit and the magical girl. Within science fiction globally and in Japan specifically, feminist science fiction has produced some of the genre's most lauded narratives, and Yoshinaga Fumi's feminist alternate history manga *Ōoku* (2005–present) has likewise proven an award-winning hit both in Japan and in English translation.[2] Taking place in an alternate Edo period in which a disease known as the "red-faced pox" devastates three-quarters of the male population, leaving women to take up the reins of power in society, the manga follows the women of the ruling Tokugawa family and the men who serve them in the eponymous inner chambers of the shogunal palace in Edo, beginning with the accession of Yoshimune in 1720 CE before backtracking to the start of the epidemic in the 1630s under Iemitsu and moving forward.

Ōoku is an example of the alternate history subgenre of science fiction, which has a history dating back at least to science fiction's Golden Age in the postwar years and which has recently become well known enough to garner critical attention from academic historians, whose responses have been mixed. In an influential article in 2002, Gavriel Rosenfeld surveys several alternate history texts, all written by men and centering around inflection points in U.S. history. Rosenfeld declares flatly that alternate history's importance lies in the way it "sheds light upon the evolution of historical memory."[3] Rosenfeld further claims that alternate history's utility for its writers and readers lies only in its commentary on the present, which inevitably expresses the author's satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the same. To those familiar with science fiction as a genre, however, Rosenfeld's claims about alternate history are reductive. In *The Alternate History,* literary scholar Karen Hellekson discusses some of the same historian-edited anthologies of alternate history that Rosenfeld cites, noting that they were attempts to discipline the wild invention of alternate history by excluding texts deemed too implausible or "frivolous."[4] That frivolity, however—making the past a playground for a writer's imagination, as well as the future—is an essential part of what makes science fiction and alternate history narratives popular.

In contrast to Rosenfeld's declaration that "alternate history is inherently presentist," Hellekson presents a much more nuanced evaluation of alternate history's affordances, meanings, and potentialities when she argues that "these texts change the present by transforming the past."[5] Hellekson's interpretation of alternate history considers the subgenre as a mode not just for expressing dissatisfaction but for articulating productive critique of and dissent from prevailing views: a way of imagining alternatives in the past,

the present, and in the future. Indeed, examining alternate history narratives beyond Rosenfeld's U.S.-centric, and entirely male-authored, examples reveal that the subgenre contains much more complex, conflicted, and generative texts than he or most historians realize. Alternate history demonstrates the ways in which non-scholars understand history and can transform familiar, "standard" narratives of Dead White Males Doing Things into tools of imagination, resistance, and critique.

ALTERNATE HISTORY DEMONSTRATES THE WAYS IN WHICH NON-SCHOLARS UNDERSTAND HISTORY AND CAN TRANSFORM FAMILIAR, "STANDARD" NARRATIVES OF DEAD WHITE MALES DOING THINGS INTO TOOLS OF IMAGINATION, RESISTANCE, AND CRITIQUE.

Science fiction scholar Alexis Lothian writes that "the speculative logics of possibility and impossibility are sites of contestation about the meanings of the future, the present, and the past," and science fiction in general and alternate history in particular are attempts to work these logics out in narrative and to contest these meanings—and standard narratives—thereby.[6] *Ōoku* turns the history of early modern Japan into just such a site of contestation, as Yoshinaga brings her longstanding concerns as a feminist and as a female writer of women's manga to bear on what scholars once argued was the period of Japanese history in which women's social position was lowest.[7] Rewriting the official history of the Tokugawa shogunate to feature women in positions of explicit social and political authority changes the meaning of the past in the manga, and has ramifications for the future as well as for the present.

PUTTING THE ALTERNATIVE IN ALTERNATE

One question that examining alternate history raises is how non-scholars conceptualize history. Educational psychologist Sam Wineburg argues in *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts* (2001) that even in the history classroom tacit cultural assumptions "shape our ideas about what is central in history and what is peripheral, what to look for and what to overlook."[8] In his book, Wineburg describes an experiment that he and his fellow researchers conducted with U.S. grade school students, asking them to draw pictorial representations of such broad categories of U.S. historical figures as "Pilgrim," "pioneer," and "hippie." The results were profoundly gendered in that the majority of students depicted the past as populated by solitary (white) men, and in that girls were vastly more likely than boys to depict family units. Wineburg

concludes that how we conceptualize the past is a function of "culturally coded prompts that tap into gender stereotypes" (and other stereotypes about race, sexuality, disability, and social class as well).[9] Far from the past being an independent progenitor of the way we think about present historical circumstances, present historical circumstances shape our retrospective views of the past by default. Learning to discard this presentism when considering the past takes time, and it often challenges even the most gifted students in history classrooms: the notion of change over time in everything, even such socially sacrosanct categories as race, sexuality, and gender, is mind-bending when first encountered.

History does not operate in a sociopolitical vacuum, and Gavriel Rosenfeld's dismissal of alternate history narratives is unwarranted: science fiction in general and alternate history in particular has a great capacity to upend current cultural assumptions in exactly the same way that discarding presentism does. As Lothian argues, part of the appeal of science fiction lies in the fact that it can and does "articulate temporalities other than those that reproduce the predictable dystopias of the present," and in articulating those temporalities, science fiction offers both the temporary pleasure of imaginative escape from the present's predictable dystopias, and the opportunity to use those temporalities to create more long-lasting change by using their critiques as fulcrums on which to seek to move the world into a different track.[10] This is essentially the premise, whether implicit or explicit, of feminist science fiction, and of other works and subgenres that do not reflect either the dystopian present or familiar futures.

Science fictional narratives rely on what Darko Suvin famously called a "moment of estrangement": science fiction locates that moment in the future, while alternate history places it in the past.[11] This moment of estrangement is purposefully destabilizing (because readers must suspend their disbelief to accept the science fictional premise of the text), and although some premises have become hackneyed, it can be a powerful, even transformative, experience. Feminist science fiction narratives routinely capitalize on and amplify that moment's destabilizing effect for the purpose of critique, and in the case of *Ōoku*, this effect is further intensified by the visual nature of manga: the full-page spreads of a female shogun presiding over an assembly of female daimyo in Edo Castle are profoundly disorienting when one first sees them; indeed, the normalization of the sight of women openly exercising authority in every sphere of early modern Japanese society is one of the manga's more subversive achievements. Given that *Ōoku* is marketed in Japan as a *josei* (women's) manga, the least popular of the four major manga marketing

categories in terms of sales, the manga's challenge to the patriarchal norms of Japanese society past and present via its articulation of an alternate temporality in which women rule must form part of its appeal: as of this writing it has been adapted for film twice, in addition to a ten-episode *jidaigeki* (historical) TV drama.[12]

The construction of historical narratives is an important part of the narrative of *Ōoku* itself; shogun Yoshimune's curiosity about the origins of the female-dominated world in which she rules provides the framing device for volumes two through seven of the manga, as Yoshimune peruses the secret history of the Ōoku and of the shogunate. This *Record of Dying Days* details the agonizing process by which female rule was legitimated within the confines of Edo Castle; crucially, Yoshimune's new knowledge of the red-faced pox and its history compels her to relax the restrictions on the circulation of *rangaku*, the "Dutch learning" imported from Europe via Nagasaki, so that it can be used for research into the disease, providing the overarching narrative of the manga's more recent volumes.

Learning history has consequences, as does forgetting it: in many ways these aspects of *Ōoku* literally bear out Karen Hellekson's argument that alternate histories "foreground the 'constructedness' of history and the role narrative plays in this construction."[13] Alongside the positive construction of historical narratives in the secret *Record of Dying Days*, *Ōoku* also depicts the negative process of historical forgetting. Female officials in the manga take on masculine names when they assume office; this practice is the trigger for Yoshimune's curiosity about the past, and it is also one of the reasons that Edo townswomen only a few generations after the beginning of the epidemic blithely assume that historical figures with masculine names—such as Nobunaga, Hideyoshi, and Ieyasu—were in fact female. Equating a society with natural sex ratios to the mythological "age of the gods," or at the latest to the time of the *Tale of Genji* centuries earlier, these townswomen unwittingly demonstrate just how quickly and how thoroughly popular memory, and conventional wisdom, can change.

Such scenes also indicate that change, once made, can very easily go from being radical to being unquestionably familiar—and this, of course, is one of the reasons that change is often strenuously resisted. The flexibility of historical memory in this alternate Edo recalls Jack Halberstam's discussion of ways in which forgetting "becomes a way of resisting the heroic and grand logics of recall and unleashes new forms of memory that relate more to spectrality than to hard evidence, to lost genealogies than to inheritance, to erasure than to inscription."[14] Indeed, there is an additional irony, and applicability, in the

fact that this particular interlude occurs after the women have left a *kabuki* performance: the beautiful men on the Edo *kabuki* stages are played entirely by women, and the townswomen's meditation on the nature of past Japanese society is inspired entirely by a spectral—i.e., nonexistent—referent: the beautiful man who is in reality a woman, and whose slippage between these categories calls them both into question. Similarly, the woman who brought the Tokugawa shogunate through the ravages of the red-faced pox, the female Iemitsu, chooses to preserve the fiction that she never succeeded her father, ensuring that her own history is utterly erased. For the female Iemitsu, forgetting is her final gesture of loyalty to a vanished way of life in which she had no consequence, just as for her, women taking up the reins of power is explicitly only a temporary, stopgap measure. Hellekson argues that alternate histories "make readers rethink their world and how it has become what it is"; sure enough, reading such scenes is extremely disorienting, as the reader's knowledge that historical reality *wasn't* that way comes forcibly up against the question of *why* it *couldn't* have been that way.[15]

PUTTING MALE CHARACTERS IN THE DEPENDENT AND SUBSERVIENT POSITIONS SO OFTEN OCCUPIED BY WOMEN, PARTICULARLY IN HISTORICAL DRAMAS, HIGHLIGHTS THE INEQUALITY AND ESSENTIALLY ARBITRARY NATURE OF PUTTING ANYONE IN SUCH POSITIONS BASED ON CONSTRUCTED CATEGORIES SUCH AS GENDER.

The answer that *Ōoku* gives to that question is the social construction of gender and of gendered social roles; the process by which female authority becomes first a possibility, then a grudgingly accepted necessity, and finally the unquestioned social hegemony is dramatized through the traumatic childhood and unhappy adulthood of the female Iemitsu. But even as she and other women openly take on more authority, gender roles do not simply flip; the narration notes that while the social roles assigned to each gender shift, men still come out ahead in that women take on almost all the work of production, while men are obligated only to survive and to father children. Male characters in later volumes of the manga are constrained by society's resulting sexist assumptions, and the men surrounding the shogun are utterly and often unhappily dependent on her will and whims. Putting male characters in the dependent and subservient positions so often occupied by women, particularly in historical dramas, highlights the inequality and essentially arbitrary nature of putting anyone in such positions based on constructed categories such as gender.

In its depiction of the impact of historical learning, of the construction of historical memory, and of the construction of gender roles over time, *Ōoku* resembles nothing so much as a scholarly historical narrative. Its use of biography is somewhat outmoded compared to the mainstream of current professional historical practice, but biography, which dates back to the writings of Xenophon in Greece in the fourth century BCE and to those of Sima Qian in China in the second century BCE, is one of the oldest narrative modes in historiography, and it remains a popular genre of historical writing even now: that *Ōoku* is organized around the lives of the shogun and their attendants is not a sign that it is simple or underserving of attention, but rather is a mark of the divergence between the popular and the professional understanding of history, and of historiography.[16]

Far more than a simple archive of historical memory, *Ōoku* is a form of popular (in both senses of the word) historical writing: it is one of the "way stations of historical practice," in which Wineburg is interested, turned into sequential art, a perfect example of Hellekson's dictum that alternate history occupies a middle ground between historiography and historical fiction.[17] Whereas a professional historian writing on, for example, gender in the Edo period would discard "what if?" scenarios and biographies of powerful officials as steps toward writing a work of professional historiography, the manga takes them as its focus in a way that is no less serious for being nonacademic; its concerns end where a professional historian's would begin. For these reasons, *Ōoku* and alternate histories in general ought to be understood not as records of historical memory but as archives of popular historical understanding.

THE INNER CHAMBERS

Although the red-faced pox assuredly causes social dislocation, Yoshinaga's Japan continues under the Pax Tokugawa that the Edo period experienced in the actual historical record, and the world of *Ōoku* is not a dystopia. Both patriarchy and matriarchy in *Ōoku* are about equally effective at providing good government: historical events in the manga unfold very much in parallel with the actual historical record, meaning that the record of famines, of boom years, and of the fluctuations in the rice-to-silver ratio is essentially unchanged despite the gender of the people in power.

Creating a manga is exhausting work, as Yoshinaga has previously dramatized in her manga, and although her decision to transpose the actual historical record into the manga is surely a labor-saving device, it has the effect

of heightening the focus on characters' emotions and personal interactions, since it is in these that the meaningful differences between historical events in *Ōoku* and the actual historical record can be found.[18] Some of these interactions are indeed sites where Yoshinaga contests the meaning and the standard narrative of the historical past and unequal present, but others are in a kind of metafictional complicity with the current state of things. In this respect the manga and its readers form what Katie King calls a "pastpresent," in which "pasts and presents very literally mutually construct each other" and that today "are actually necessary for important forms of knowledge making, not limited to teaching knowledges in entertaining ways."[19]

To take an obvious example of contestation in a pastpresent, consider the scene at the beginning of volume 4 in which the female Iemitsu makes her debut as the openly female shogun and demands that, should any of her assembled feudal lords (*daimyo*) have any opposition to her taking power, they speak now or forever hold their peace. None do, which is a clear vindication of the idea that women are perfectly fit to exercise political and social power.[20] Accordingly, after this moment in the manga Iemitsu's rule is never again challenged directly, and the idea of female rulership is more or less taken for granted. King writes of pastpresents that the "making and sharing of knowledge" they engender "are not properly separated; in use they are brought together."[21] In *Ōoku's* pastpresent, the manga and its readers mutually first contest and then naturalize a matriarchal alternative to the status quo, and the manga's entertainment value is not incidental, but rather crucial, to this process.

By contrast, what may be the most infamous scene in the entire manga is more ambiguous in its orientation toward the contemporary social politics of manga consumption and creation, and by extension to the position of women in society in general. This scene, which takes place in volume 5, depicts the louche shogun Tsunayoshi attempting to order two of her male retainers, whom she knows to be in love with each other, to have sex for her entertainment. Distraught, one of them attempts to commit suicide but is stopped by the appearance of the grand chamberlain, whose job includes supervising the shogun's assignations. He orders the two retainers to depart before *almost* kissing Tsunayoshi, then unceremoniously telling her to go to sleep.[22]

Yoshinaga Fumi initially made her name as a writer of boys' love (BL or *yaoi*) manga, which (much like fan fiction) depict male characters in same-sex relationships but are overwhelmingly created and consumed by women. Yoshinaga has depicted her sense of guilt, as a writer of BL, over possibly exploiting gay men and stereotypes about them in her manga before; the semi-autobiographical *Not Love but Delicious Foods Makes Me So Happy!* includes a

chapter in which she goes out to dinner with a gay male friend and drunkenly tries to apologize to him for her career. Somewhat bemusedly, he tells her that she has nothing to apologize for because her manga have nothing to do with his life.[23]

Given this background, reading Tsunayoshi in this scene in *Ōoku* as a female creator or reader of BL manga is not difficult, particularly since Yoshinaga systematically changes many other aspects of the historical Tsunayoshi's life to make Tsunayoshi much more congruent with romance tropes. Whereas the historical Tsunayoshi had no children because he was apparently exclusively interested in having sex with men, in the manga Tsunayoshi's immense heterosexual appetites—her predations drive at least one of her lords to suicide when the shogun seduces first her husband and then her son—is ironically contrasted with her infertility. The historical Tsunayoshi was murdered by his imperial wife when the shogun's latest infatuation with a much younger man threatened, in her view, the stability of the government; in the manga, Tsunayoshi is smothered during an illness by her closest retainer, who has evidently harbored a lifelong unrequited passion for her. Further playing to romantic tropes, it is eventually revealed that the shogun and the aforementioned chamberlain have each nursed an enduring secret love for the other—but the morning after they consummate their passion, just when it looks as though the shogun may have finally found a happy romantic relationship, the chamberlain dies peacefully of old age in his sleep.

The straight-washing of *Ōoku* in general (later volumes contain scenes in which characters refer to the prevalence of lesbian relationships in post-pox society, and gay relationships within the Ōoku are occasionally discussed, but no queer relationship has been depicted at length in the actual manga thus far) and of Tsunayoshi in particular serves several purposes.[24] On one level, it keeps the manga firmly in the mainstream of *josei* comics, which do not usually feature lesbian (*yuri*) relationships, by continuing the manga's theme of unhappy heterosexual romance. On another, its relentless focus on heterosexual relationships, even in a society that is at times nearly 75 percent women, further reinforces the marginalization of queer people and queer relationships not only in contemporary Japanese society and pop culture but also in the telling of Japanese history. This is particularly ironic for a manga set in the Edo period, which, as Gregory M. Pflugfelder argues in *Cartographies of Desire,* openly celebrated the way of male–male sexuality (*nanshokudō*) as no other period in Japanese history has done.[25] Both of these strategies work to increase the manga's marketability; it is no accident that the second *Ōoku* movie, *Eien* (2012, Eternity) focuses exclusively on the Tsunayoshi romantic arc.

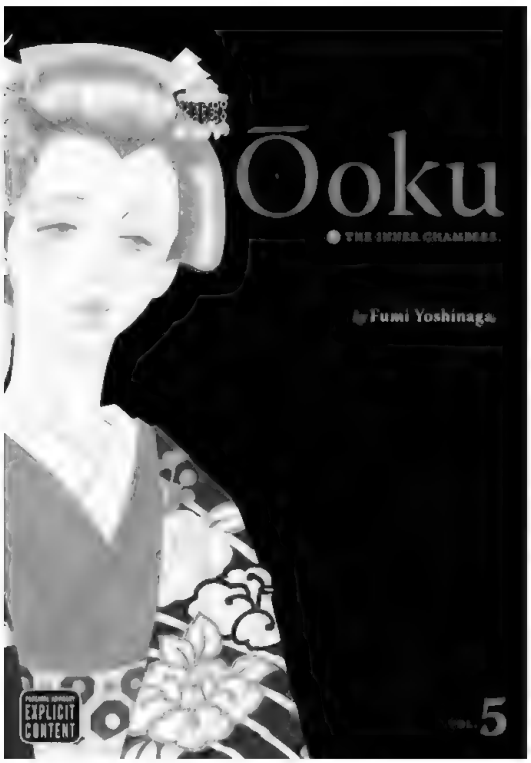


FIGURE 1. The beautiful shogun Tsunayoshi personifies many of the manga's strategies of popular historical writing. From Fumi Yoshinaga, *Ōoku: The Inner Chambers*, vol. 5. VIZ Media LLC, 2010.

In a capitalist society, even a feminist manga has to turn a profit or face cancellation. But in contesting one set of received meanings or assumptions about the past and the present, a narrative such as *Ōoku* may well find itself reinforcing others, a dilemma not confined to feminist manga but shared by every media property attempting to move beyond stereotypical discourse by offering critiques and presenting alternatives.

A REVOLUTION WITHOUT DANCING

Ōoku, as alternate history, might be deemed "frivolous" by most professional historians, but dismissing the allegedly frivolous on account of frivolity is one of the mainstays of preserving what scholar and feminist science fiction giant Joanna Russ called "socially arranged bias" in her classic work *How to Suppress Women's Writing* (1982).[26] The book is Russ's careful documentation and explosion of the rhetorical maneuvers used to deny the existence, importance, and relevance of women's writing, both historically and in the present, and by extension of women's experience. As Russ writes, "The trick in the double standard of content is to label one set of experiences as more valuable and important than the other."[27] When the double standard is levied against women's experience, which is defined as "inferior to, less important than, or 'narrower' than men's experience, women's writing is automatically denigrated."[28]

Much of what Russ writes applies, *mutatis mutandis,* to the writing and experience of other nondominant social groups. "False categorizing" in particular is wielded as a tool of suppression against many excellent writers: they and their works are systematically moved from "serious" to "not serious," from "artist" to "non-artist," and from "art" to "non-art."[29] Marginalized authors writing genre fiction are doubly impacted by these rhetorical strategies, since

genre fiction, including science fiction, is widely considered less serious, and of less literary or artistic merit, than "literary fiction."

In light of these tools of suppression, Rosenfeld's decision to focus on three specific moments in alternate history—the Nazis winning World War II, the South winning the Civil War, the American Revolution not occurring—and on narratives exploring these moments exclusively written by men is highly questionable. Rosenfeld justifies his focus on these narratives with the claim that they are three of the most popular, but his bestowing academic attention on them implicitly demarcates the category of "events of world historical importance" and includes them inside it.[30] It also validates a certain kind of historical narrative in which men are much more likely to play a prominent role than women, and by extension a certain kind of social and historical experience. As Wineburg notes, in this narrative "history remains the story of political and economic progress acted out on a public stage," and it "rests on the notion that there is a single history instead of multiple 'histories,' many of which go untold because their content is viewed as insignificant or unimportant."[31] Taking the frivolous seriously—both in scholarship and in society—is in this respect a vital equalizing maneuver, and it is no coincidence that narratives trafficking in histories that do not fit this mainstream historical mode are more likely to be deemed frivolous or "mere entertainment" in the first place. Rosenfeld's disregarding alternate histories that do not fit within his narrowly defined tranche of "serious and important," and thus using alternate history to reinforce existing categories of value which transcend the academy, does a disservice not only to readers and writers of alternate history but also to professional history itself, which continues to struggle with making room for women, queer people, and people of color both as subjects of history and as professional historians.

Ōoku, with its focus on the women of the shogunal family and their servants and retainers, may seem to hew closely to this standard narrative, but the manga's very title (its English subtitle is *The Inner Chambers,* a literal translation of the Japanese) betrays its focus on the complicated emotional and interpersonal dynamics and relationships of people in the enclosed hothouse setting of the shogunal palace. Concubines and their servants are stereotypically schemers and backstabbers, and the men of the Ōoku are no exception, but besides assigning this emotionality and plotting to male characters, another subversive aspect of Yoshinaga's manga is the impact that characters' emotional lives and relationships are shown to have on matters of state; indeed, characters' personal motivations take on outsized importance. The notorious incident of the forty-seven ronin in 1703 is a good example of

an event that takes on a different valence in alternate history: in the manga the incident is used as a pretext to reinstate the law prohibiting men from inheriting households, which had been relaxed by a prior shogun. In light of everything about early modern Japanese history that does not change in the manga, readers are forced to ask: how does gender impact history? *Would* the world be better off if women were in charge, as so many second-wave feminists and classic feminist science fiction novels argued? Like other third wave feminist texts, *Ōoku* questions gender essentialism: if, as Emma Goldman is said to have suggested, a revolution without dancing is not a revolution worth having, it may be that the revolutionary act lies not in the revolution itself but in insisting on the equal importance of both politics and frivolity.

FUTURE ALTERNATIVES

What is to be gained from taking such a view of revolutions, and of dancing? What do professional historians or scholars of Japan gain by taking alternate history texts and pop culture narratives such as *Ōoku* seriously, not as documents of historical memory but as challenges to mainstream historical discourses in which scholarly writing plays a part? What is the value of taking the alternatives that a text like *Ōoku* articulates seriously, not only as a critique of the present but as a critique of ways of talking about the present and of imagining the future?

Through texts like *Ōoku,* alternate history as a subgenre and manga as a medium have fostered a space in which the limitations of conventional (historical) narrative need not apply, in which readers and writers can enjoy an escape from the "predictable dystopias," not only of the present but also of common ways of telling a story or of relating history. Regardless of however seriously they take the business of frivolity—and many creators including Yoshinaga take it very seriously indeed—it is precisely because these narratives are deemed frivolous and unserious that they have flourished even while levying serious charges against mainstream narratives and their unthinking defaults. Although time's arrow points only one way, the human imagination may range freely in all directions.

Thus the value of alternate history lies precisely in its frivolity: a subgenre of a subgenre of fiction that has long struggled for academic and critical respect, alternate history has been freed by its very lack of being taken seriously to take almost anything and everything in recorded history as its subject, and to transform received narratives about those histories in whatever way

its writers and readers like. Not all alternate histories articulate such powerful critiques as *Ōoku* does, but on some level, whether a given work can be read as critiquing the present or the past is beside the point: the fact that alternate histories play with the "what happened" of the actual historical record by asking "what if?" is already its own critique; an insistence that nothing is inevitable, that history is not merely one damn thing after another but rather that it is contingent, that things can always change—or be changed. By the same token, so can historical narratives.

One powerful effect of alternate history is understanding the present historical reality, whatever it may be, as the product of specific historical forces, factors, and decisions that might well have turned out any number of different ways. While professional historians will (rightly) protest that at any given time, some events are far more likely to happen than others, the point remains that alternate history destabilizes the prevailing understanding of the present as natural and inevitable by pointing out that it is anything but. This destabilization in turn is not just enjoyable but also productive, even liberatory: in its imagining different possible pasts, alternate history makes it possible to imagine different possible futures—which of course must be made real in the present, thereby changing it, too. Rather than an archive of historical memory, therefore, alternate history is a standing reserve of different possible pasts, which may at any time be used to alter the future.

CONCLUSION

It is a truism that Japanese narratives tend to favor the loser rather than the victor, as the loser's story inevitably has more pathos and interest than the successes of the victor, particularly when the loser is worthy, or at least ennobled by failure.[32] This theme has cropped up in Japanese literature at least since the medieval epic the *Tale of the Heike,* the eponymous clan of the title being perhaps the ultimate tragic losers of Japanese history. Given the romantic allure of losers, then, it does not seem accidental that later volumes of *Ōoku* have set the shogunate up for a very hard fall indeed: after the long reign of the male shogun Ienari, during much of which his murderous mother dominated the shogunate and neglected the country and research into immunizing children from the red-faced pox, a woman has now become shogun again, just in time for Japan to enter the uncertainty of the so-called *bakumatsu* era (1853–68).

Although the shogunate in the historical record fell with a relative minimum of bloodshed, the uncertainties of the *bakumatsu* period that preceded the so-called Meiji Restoration were nonetheless intensely socially dislocating, and the modernization of all of Japanese society that followed in the Meiji era (1868–1912) was even more so. Particularly in the twentieth century, historians tended to portray Japan's modernization, if not the colonial empire building that was part of it, as a necessary price to pay for Japan to avoid being colonized by the West in turn, and consequently the shogunate in the nineteenth century was seen as a hindrance to needed political and social reforms. But the Tokugawa shogunate itself oversaw, over the course of its existence (1600–1868), an economic transformation of Japan that brought the country to the loftiest possible heights of preindustrial economic prosperity, and in *Ōoku* this commercial and economic transformation is accompanied by an equally profound and much swifter gender transformation. It seems possible that as the manga progresses the shogunate's growing critics will make the familiar sexist case that women are unsuited to rule, and that all of Japan's problems can be laid at the feet of the fact that the female officials of the shogunate are as incompetent and feeble as the shogunate itself. But just as the political ideology of the Meiji government should not be used as the standard by which historians evaluate the Edo period, so should in-manga criticism of the female-dominated government not be allowed to overshadow the critiques that the manga itself presents to its own society.

Moreover, failure is not in and of itself a critical or historical judgment. Jack Halberstam's argument that failure can be a generative mode is surely applicable to *Ōoku*; in *The Queer Art of Failure,* Halberstam concludes that celebrations of failure in popular culture "remind us that there is something powerful in being wrong, in losing, in failing, and that all our failures combined might just be enough, if we practice them well, to bring down the winner."[33] Just as the "failed" Tokugawa shogunate, revived in popular culture, functions as a critique of contemporary Japanese politics, so the celebration of the female shogunate—an institution that is doomed to fail—in and via *Ōoku* provides a model of a very alternative government and society that may yet inspire future change.

Ōoku itself presents trenchant critiques both of the standard portrayal of Japanese history and also of the Japanese present. Some of these critiques are explicitly feminist, such as the ease with which women assume power in society and the panoply of female officials in the manga, which can easily be read as a rebuke to the overwhelming male domination of Japanese society in general and of politics and business in particular. Others are less explicitly

feminist and more concerned with socioeconomic issues: Yoshimune's concerns with the shogunal palace's extravagance at the beginning of the manga made a notable contrast to the Japanese government's fiscal policy in 2005. Similarly, the consistent concern that good shogunal officials show for the lives and livelihoods of even the poorest commoners throughout the period's ups and downs is notably different from the indifference Japan's leaders have at times shown to the impact of today's enduring recession on Japan's most vulnerable populations. To be sure, Yoshinaga's making these critiques quite literally *visible* through the medium of manga is not the same as changing Japanese society, but it is an essential first step to any attempts to do so because to change society these critiques must be articulated, and before they can be articulated they must be understood as problems in the first place. Popular narratives like *Ōoku* are thus an essential imaginative space in which possible social changes, as well as their possible antecedents and ramifications, can be encountered and mapped before they are realized: the first time is entertaining; the second time is revolutionary.

The manga also points to the ways in which alternate history can be read not as "mere" escapism or "just" a record of historical memory but rather as a piece of popular culture asking worthy questions seriously, and seeking to question or to overturn common assumptions by doing so. If the past is another country, then the past in alternate history is another world entirely: not only do they do things differently there, but it takes some effort to get there in the first place. But although the effort required to reach the past of alternate histories is real, it is certainly not less than that required to bring those pasts and the possible futures they may inspire into alignment. Via the critiques they raise and by the very terms of their existence, alternate histories such as *Ōoku* demonstrate not that we live in the best or the worst of all possible worlds, but that another world is always possible.

Notes

I thank Alexis Lothian for her encouragement and discussion, and for the opportunity to publish an early draft of my thoughts on *Ōoku* in *The WisCon Chronicles* volume 6 (Seattle: Aqueduct Press, 2012); my fellow panelists and audience members at Wiscon 36 for a fascinating discussion of the manga; and the members of my critique group in Abigail De Kosnik's fall 2013 New Media seminar for their incisive feedback. Thanks as well to Mikhail Koulikov for suggested reading.

1. I use the term "alternate history" in this paper in conformity with science fiction parlance, as well as a mark of difference from the "counterfactual history" of professional

historians, which is commonly understood as a branch of economic history involving the computation of "what if not?" scenarios.

2. Yoshinaga Fumi, *Ōoku*, 12 vols. (Tokyo: Hakusensha, 2005–present); translated as *Ōoku: The Inner Chambers* (San Francisco: Viz Media, 2009–present). Unusually for a mangaka, Yoshinaga openly identifies as a feminist. For more on the details of her career and on the Japanese pop culture antecedents of *Ōoku,* see Hikari Hori, "Views from Elsewhere: Female Shoguns in Yoshinaga Fumi's *Ōoku* and Their Precursors in Japanese Popular Culture," *Japanese Studies* 32, no. 1 (2012): 77–95.

3. Gavriel Rosenfeld, "Why Do We Ask 'What If?' Reflections on the Function of Alternate History," *History and Theory* 41, no. 4 (2002): 93.

4. Karen Hellekson, *The Alternate History: Refiguring Historical Time* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 2001).

5. Rosenfeld, "Why Do We Ask 'What If?'" 93; Hellekson, *The Alternate History,* 4.

6. Alexis Lothian, "Deviant Futures: Queer Temporality and the Cultural Politics of Science Fiction" (PhD diss., University of Southern California, 2012), 9.

7. This interpretation of the status of women in Tokugawa society, and the general view of the Edo period as a dystopia, is now more or less outdated in historiography of the period. For a good overview of women's status and potential social roles in the period, see Laura Nenzi's *Excursions in Identity: Travel and the Intersection of Place, Gender, and Status in Edo Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008), or *The Female as Subject: Reading and Writing in Early Modern Japan,* ed. P. F. Kornicki, Mara Patessio, and G. G. Rowley (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2010).

8. Samuel S. Wineburg, *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts: Charting the Future of Teaching the Past* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001).

9. Ibid., 129.

10. Lothian, "Deviant Futures," 9.

11. Darko Suvin, "On the Poetics of the Science Fiction Genre," *College English* 34, no. 3 (1972): 372–82.

12. Hikari Hori reads *Ōoku* as a shojo manga; while the genre divisions are to some extent arbitrary marketing categories and Yoshinaga has been strongly influenced by the shojo classics of the 1970s and 80s, Hakusensha is a *josei* publisher and *Ōoku* is published and marketed as a *josei* title.

13. Hellekson, *The Alternate History,* 5.

14. Jack Halberstam (published as Judith Halberstam), *The Queer Art of Failure* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2011), 15.

15. Hellekson, *The Alternate History,* 5.

16. Ernst Breisach, *Historiography: Ancient, Medieval, and Modern,* 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 25–26.

17. Hellekson, *The Alternate History,* 29.

18. Yoshinaga's semi-autobiographical *Not Love but Delicious Foods Make Me So Happy!,* trans. William Flanagan (New York: Yen Press, 2010) offers many glimpses into the life of a *mangaka,* as well as restaurant reviews.

19. Katie King, *Networked Reenactments: Stories Transdisciplinary Knowledges Tell* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2012), 12.

20. Yoshinaga, *Ōoku* 4 (Tokyo: Hakusensha, 2008), 1–11.

21. King, *Networked Reenactments,* 12.

22. Yoshinaga, *Ōoku* 5 (Tokyo: Hakusensha, 2009), 121–37.

23. Yoshinaga, *Not Love but Delicious Foods Make Me So Happy!,* 44.

24. Hori sees the manga's exclusive focus on heterosexual relationships as part of a dystopian regime of "compulsive heterosexuality" connected to the bare need for society and the shogunate to reproduce itself, but this seems a stretch unless the historical Edo period—and the present—is also understood as a dystopia. Moreover, she participates in the same straight-washing as Yoshinaga when she reads the word *koi,* commonly translated as "(romantic) love," as "loyalty" in the Tsunayoshi episodes, ostensibly in homage to Ikeda Riyoko's *The Rose of Versailles.* Hori, "Views from Elsewhere," 81, 87.

25. Gregory M. Pflugfelder, *Cartographies of Desire: Male–Male Sexuality in Japanese Discourse, 1600–1950* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999). Understanding such relationships as "queer" is a historical anachronism; to do so is to put oneself in a past-present with a society that conceptualized sex and sexuality differently than our own.

26. Joanna Russ, *How to Suppress Women's Writing,* 1st ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983), 48.

27. Ibid., 40.

28. Ibid., 47.

29. Ibid., 50–53.

30. Rosenfeld, "Why Do We Ask 'What If?,'" 94.

31. Wineburg, *Historical Thinking,* 130.

32. For more on this theme in Japanese history and literature, see Ivan Morris, *The Nobility of Failure: Tragic Heroes in the History of Japan* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1975).

33. Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure,* 120.

SUSAN W. FURUKAWA

Deconstructing the Taikō: The Problem of Hideyoshi as Postwar Business Model

Throughout the course of the twentieth-century, images of the sixteenth-century samurai leader Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537–98) have been mobilized in discourses on Japanese national identity. In the early postwar period, authors used counterfactual histories about Hideyoshi that placed him in parallel universes to grapple with issues of Japan's violent not-so-distant past, while seeking to help define what it meant to be Japanese after a failed war. In the early 1950s, novels placed Hideyoshi in modern-day conference rooms, a parallel figure living a parallel life meant to encourage early postwar salarymen to work hard for the sake of national recovery. Early postwar tales of Hideyoshi reframed him as a model for strong leadership and determined economic growth, but by the 1970s counterfactual portrayals of Hideyoshi began to highlight possible fissures in this interpretation. In the end, Hideyoshi's ever-shifting legacy, as portrayed in late twentieth-century works of historical fiction that seek to relocate him in time and space, reflects a contested and fractured Japanese past, present, and future. Although there seem to be limitless examples of Hideyoshi being rewritten for the sake of the nation, this essay introduces two vivid counterhistories of him that demonstrate the conflicting ways he has been portrayed in the postwar era. The first is

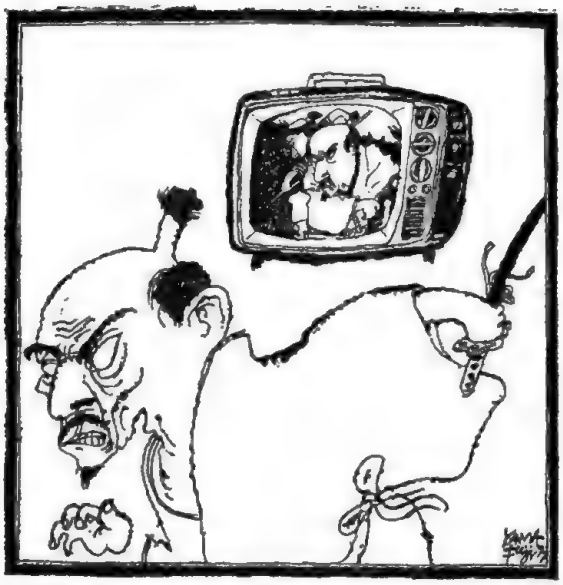


FIGURE 1. Illustration by Yamafuji Shōji, originally published in Tsutsui Yasutaka, "Yamazaki," *Bessatsu Shōsetsu Shinchō* (April 1972): 65.

Kasahara Ryōzō's *Sarariiman shusse Taikōki* (A *Taikōki* of a salaryman rising up in the world) series, and the second is Tsutsui Yasutaka's novella "Yamazaki" (Figure 1). Kasahara remakes Hideyoshi by having him fight his battles in the boardrooms of the 1950s instead of on historical battlefields. Tsutsui, on the other hand, interpolates modern technologies into historical events, inviting his readers to think more critically about the use of historical figures in discourses on Japanese society and technological advancement in the late 1960s and the early 1970s. By making Hideyoshi into a pop culture icon to be idolized—or criticized—in the postwar period, both of these works uproot him from his traditional historical context and create scenarios that force readers to confront the social implications of reading the "samurai salaryman" as a modern-day hero.

HIDEYOSHI IN CONTEXT

Hideyoshi's meteoric rise to power and equally dramatic fall from grace have made him one of Japan's most written-about historical figures. Despite the often contradictory accounts of his life and career—he helped unify the realm at the end of the sixteenth century but also instigated two ill-advised invasions of Korea—Hideyoshi has remained a popular hero. In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, Hideyoshi has been depicted in literature, film, and manga as a man whose ability to be loyal, hard-working, inspiring, ingenious, and a master strategist should be emulated by political and business leaders. Varying accounts of Hideyoshi's life are often the basis for television dramas and historical novels, which "rewrite" the history surrounding his rise and fall in an attempt to participate in and/or redefine the Japanese national discourse. Nowhere is this more evident than in the multiple "new" rewritings of Oze Hoan's 1625 biography *Taikōki* (The records of Toyotomi Hideyoshi). The first popular literature version of *Taikōki* was serialized in *Hōchi* newspaper

from 1925 to 1934 by Yada Sōun, one of a group of young writers committed to bringing popular fiction to the masses. Sōun created a *Taikōki* that defined the experiences of a generation. His text, which he also reformulated into pre- and postwar illustrated books for young boys, became the basis for many later works of fiction and manga about Hideyoshi, including Yoshikawa Eiji's *Shinsho Taikōki,* serialized during World War II.[1] Up to and particularly during World War II, historians and writers of historical fiction emphasized Hideyoshi's successes on the battlefield and his focus on expansion in Asia. Immediately following the Occupation and into the late 1960s, however, as Japan sought to distance itself from the war and follow a path of postwar economic ascendancy, the sixteenth-century warrior was reimagined as an effective business leader.[2]

It is not hard to see how Hideyoshi's rise from impoverished farmer to ruler of the realm would resonate in a nation intent on rising up from the ashes of World War II. What is surprising is the degree to which Hideyoshi becomes a model for Japanese business during the long process of economic recovery.[3] After a tumultuous first postwar decade, the economy began to recover with the outbreak of the Korean War, entering a period of rapid growth. This economic growth enabled white-collar company workers, more commonly called salarymen, and their families to become consumers in a way not seen before and during the war. As a result, a new genre of novels and business manuals geared toward this sector of society emerged, with Hideyoshi as a central figure.

HIDEYOSHI IN THE LATE 1950s AND EARLY 1960s

The resounding success of the *Sarariiman shusse Taikōki* (A *Taikōki* of a salaryman rising up in the world) series created by screenwriter and author Kasahara Ryōzō (1912–2002) in the late 1950s indicates the degree to which the Japanese population was ready to read Hideyoshi as something other than battlefield hero. Kasahara's series began first as a collection of feature films directed by Kakei Masanori at Toho Studios, and then as novelizations of the films by Kasahara, based on his own original screenplays (Figure 2).[4] The films and novels offered the perfect contemporary postwar hero in the guise of an up-and-coming salaryman whose striking resemblance to Hideyoshi serves to emphasize his innate business prowess. By giving readers a way to reconceptualize warriors of the past, Kasahara's series simultaneously enable them to envision a nonviolent postwar Japanese identity.

FIGURE 2. Film still from *Sarariiman shusse Taikōki* (1957) produced by Toho Studios and directed by Kakei Masanori. *Left to right:* Takarada Akira (Maeda Keiichirō), Kato Daisuke (Company President Sōda), and Kobayashi Keiju (Kinoshita Hidekichi).

The story begins with a young Kinoshita Hidekichi, a Hokkaido native who is in his senior year of college in Tokyo and looking for his first job. Told in the third person by a meddlesome narrator who interrupts the flow of events to add his opinion, the story traces Hidekichi's eventual success in landing a job at Japan's most prestigious company, Japan Motors, and his often bumpy but ultimately triumphant rise to the position of department head. Along the way, he encounters experiences and characters clearly meant by Kasahara to recall the well-known exploits of Hidekichi's sixteenth-century doppelganger Hideyoshi, popularized as they were by various widely read earlier popular historical fiction works based on Oze's *Taikōki*, such as those written by Yada Sōun and Yoshikawa Eiji.

Hideyoshi was not the only warrior from Japan's past that Kasahara chose to rewrite, but he was his most fertile subject, given the five movies and three books that resulted from his exploration of *Taikōki*. Other works like *Sarariiman Chūshingura* (1961, The salaryman's treasury of loyal retainers) and *Shachō Taiheiki* (1959, The salaryman's chronicles of great peace), which were contemporaneous to the *Sarariiman shusse Taikōki* series, also place famous warriors from Japan's past in modern-day companies. Unlike the *Sarariiman shusse Taikōki* series, however, these other renditions did not result in

multiple films and novels. Hideyoshi's popularity as a subject in Kasahara's films highlights how his perceived status as an underdog became the most easily mobilized part of his narrative during the postwar period, as everyday Japanese people dreamed of similarly astounding ascensions to success. As the word *shusse* in the title indicates, *Sarariiman shusse Taikōki* is a story about one man's climb to the top.[5] Hidekichi never relents in his struggle to overcome his Hokkaido roots and to succeed as an employee of Japan Motors. His incantation of "Boys, be ambitious!" throughout the series links him to the sense of integrity, hard work, and entrepreneurial spirit that contributed to the development of Japan into a modernized nation during the Meiji period.[6] Hidekichi reminds himself to work hard and never to give up by repeating this famous phrase at many key points in the plot. For instance, he utters this phrase while recording an impassioned message on a tape of President Sōda's favorite traditional Japanese music, when he finally gets called back to work at the main office after a period of exile, when his weeks of hard work finally result in the delivery of a much-needed piece of machinery, and when he is promoted to subsection chief (*kakarichō*).[7] The phrase certainly would have been familiar to the readers of Kasahara's work and most likely elicited in them the same kind of exuberance and determination that it does for Hidekichi in the narrative.

Kasahara draws numerous connections between his twentieth-century businessman and the sixteenth-century warrior. For one, the name Kinoshita Hidekichi combines one of Toyotomi Hideyoshi's last names with an alternative reading of the characters that make up his first name. The first view readers have of Hidekichi is of a small man with monkey-like movements who leads his college cheering section—a reference to Hideyoshi's well-known nickname "Saru" (monkey). Hidekichi's friends and acquaintances are likewise designed to remind readers of various famous sixteenth-century figures. For example, Hidekichi's confidant and junior in the cheering section is Kuroiwa, a name meant to recall Kuroda Kanbei, one of Hideyoshi's closest allies. His longtime on-again, off-again friend and fellow member of the cheering section Maeda Keichirō becomes one of his greatest competitors at Japan Motors. This character is clearly a reference to Maeda Toshiie, Hideyoshi's compatriot under Nobunaga who later affiliated with Hideyoshi's rival Shibata Katsuie before signing a peace pact with Hideyoshi. Kinoshita's recently graduated *sempai* (senior) from the cheering section, a year ahead of Hideyoshi in school, is Oda Nobuta, a name certainly meant to recall Hideyoshi's lord, Oda Nobunaga. By establishing these connections between Hidekichi and Hideyoshi in the first chapters, Kasahara creates a discursive structure that draws the reader into a constant

comparison between the sixteenth-century warlord and the twentieth-century businessman. He also produces a character who was widely popular with a general public intent on succeeding economically in a new age.

For his series, Kasahara drew from the long history of *Taikōki* adaptations, the most recent being Yoshikawa's *Shinsho Taikōki* (serialized from 1939–45, The new *Taikōki*). Unlike Yoshikawa's more traditional adaptation, however, Kasahara placed standard *Taikōki* representations of Hideyoshi's loyalty, perseverance, and ability to influence people into a context that was relevant to postwar readers. As a result, while Yoshikawa's Hideyoshi enthusiastically embraces his menial assignment to kitchen supervisor, Kasahara's Hideki chi eagerly pursues his job as warehouse supervisor, despite the fact that it is a clear demotion. Just as Yoshikawa's Hideyoshi repairs Nobunaga's castle wall in three days, Hidekichi does an equally impressive task for his era by selling thirty cars in a week. And while Yoshikawa's Hideyoshi goes behind enemy lines to persuade known enemies of Nobunaga to join his forces, Kasahara's Hidekichi sneaks into the headquarters and meetings of rival companies to gain access to top-ranking officials and negotiate new contracts with those companies. By focusing on Hidekichi's unorthodox methods, Kasahara emphasizes that his protagonist's high motivation and his ability to clearly articulate his commitment to the success of the company repeatedly earns him respect. In this way, Kasahara's series promotes a national discourse of economic growth through individual hard work and loyalty to one's company that had come to replace wartime discourses of military success through living, fighting, and dying for the nation.

PLACED IN HIGH-RISES AND CONFERENCE ROOMS, KASAHARA'S HIDEKICHI/ HIDEYOSHI BECAME PALATABLE AND RELEVANT FOR A GENERATION OF PEOPLE READY TO MOVE ON FROM THE ASHES OF WORLD WAR II.

Constant rewritings of fictionalized versions of Hideyoshi's life serialized in major newspapers and literary magazines during the twentieth century ensured that readers were familiar with the common perceptions of Hideyoshi that Kasahara manipulates to create a business superhero well suited to the ambitious 1950s reader. By playing with those existing perceptions and by creating a rags-to-riches version of Hideyoshi's/Hidekichi's determined ascent that resonated with a salaryman audience intent on following in his footsteps, these novels provided the first rewriting of Hideyoshi on an entirely new, nonviolent battlefield and gave readers a way to think about the past that did not require dealing with issues of aggression or war guilt. Placed in high-rises and conference rooms, Kasahara's Hidekichi/Hideyoshi became palatable and

relevant for a generation of people ready to move on from the ashes of World War II and more than willing to embrace the model of perseverance, hard work, and dedication that he represented.

HIDEYOSHI IN THE LATE 1960s AND EARLY 1970s

By the time Tsutsui Yasutaka wrote his novella "Yamazaki" fifteen years after Kasahara's films, much had changed. With the outbreak of the Korean War in the 1950s, Japan entered into a period of extended economic growth that would last until the early 1970s. From 1950 until 1973, the gross national product of Japan grew at an average rate of 10 percent per year—record growth that eventually became known as the economic miracle.[8] By the mid-1960s, Japan had entered a period now known as "the Golden Sixties." Not only did the Japanese population in general have more spending power, but their newly acquired middle-class consciousness stimulated higher rates of consumption and increased their desire to own expensive items. According to economist Yutaka Kōsai, while only 7.8 percent of nonagricultural households had televisions in 1957, for example, the number had jumped to 95 percent by 1965. There were similar jumps in the ownership of refrigerators and washing machines. In other words, the 1950s and 1960s in Japan saw the emergence of a new national identity centered on national and personal wealth.[9]

While Kasahara's Hideyoshi resonated with a nation intent on pursuing economic success, Tsutsui's Hideyoshi calls readers to question the rapid commercialization of society that characterized the late 1960s and early 1970s. In "Yamazaki," first published in April 1972 in *Bessatsu Shōsetsu Shinchō,* science fiction and parody writer Tsutsui Yasutaka asks readers to consider what would really happen if warriors like Toyotomi Hideyoshi were leadership models today.[10] Whereas Kasahara seems to be playing with images of Hideyoshi in the twentieth century as a way of entertaining his audience while exhorting them to bring the same sort of commitment to their endeavors as Hideyoshi did to his four hundred years before, Tsutsui uses bifurcating temporalities in his story about Hideyoshi to articulate a clear criticism of the idealized past apparent in prewar and early postwar popular literature in which Hideyoshi is always the hero. Along the way, Tsutsui uses this cautionary Hideyoshi tale to condemn Japan as both an increasingly technological and increasingly economy-driven society.

By applying what Ozaki Hotsuki refers to as his "science fictional perspective on history," Tsutsui creates metahistorical fiction to satirize the

idealization of Hideyoshi.[11] His scientific rhetoric dismantles common interpretations of the past to challenge the basic assumptions behind any preexisting historical master narrative powering these stories. As a result, Tsutsui's "Yamazaki," which begins just before Hideyoshi learns of Oda's death and ends as he runs into battle against Akechi Mitsuhide, parodies the tradition of representing Hideyoshi as a paragon of the common man. By deconstructing the genre of historical fiction and by criticizing the tendency to idealize technology and to turn to leaders of the past for guidance into the future, Tsutsui uses the events leading up to the battle of Yamazaki to undermine the use of Hideyoshi as a hero while also making a statement against the changes toward a technology-focused society he sees in late 1960s and early 1970s Japan.

On the surface Tsutsui's story is simply a retelling of the events leading up to Hideyoshi's victory at Yamazaki, a victory that put him squarely on the path to becoming ruler of the realm. But while the story mimics a piece of historical fiction, it quickly becomes something more. Instead of using conventional strategies and narrative methods, Tsutsui creates a work of historical fiction that introduces anachronistic references and second-guesses original source materials to force readers to reconsider the nature of historical fiction and popular tales from the past. Tsutsui's deconstructive references are apparent from the opening lines of the story and become more and more absurd as the story progresses. In the first line, Tsutsui's report on the exact time of Nobunaga's death is followed by the sentence, "At that time, Hideyoshi was in Okayama prefecture."[12] Even the most historically uninformed Japanese reader would know that Okayama prefecture did not exist until several hundred years after the events being described.[13] Throughout the story, Tsutsui shifts back and forth between the historical and current names for the places he discusses, sometimes even doing so on the same page to highlight the incongruities between the popular stories of Japan's past and contemporary Japan, and as a result calls into question any tendencies readers might have to seek out the past as a model for the present.[14]

He further deconstructs the genre by interrupting the story to insert his own opinions and by giving the reader obviously dubious or contradictory information. His interruptions constantly question the sources of information and the believability of certain events even as he describes them. For example, after recording the reaction to the news of Oda's death by Hideyoshi's faithful retainer Kuroda Kanbei (1546–1604), who exclaims that it must be the will of the Christian God that Hideyoshi have this opportunity, Tsutsui writes, "This is apparently recorded in *Mōri ke monjo, Tōdai-ki,* and two or three other places, but somehow I cannot believe that Kanbei would say something like

that at a time like this."[15] Because these examples appear in the first paragraphs of "Yamazaki," it is clear that while Tsutsui is using standard historical fiction narrative strategies, he does not intend this story to be a typical piece of historical fiction, nor does he expect his readers to buy into the narrative he's choosing to tell.

"IF JUNKEI REALLY DIDN'T COME HERE, THEN WHY IS THE STORY OF DŌGATŌGE JUNKEI PASSED ON EVEN TODAY?"

Tsutsui's deconstruction of historical fiction to problematize his readers' understanding of the past is also apparent in his earlier novella *Tsutsui Junkei* (1969), which was originally published in *Shūkan Bunshun* from September 1968 to December of the same year. In this story, Tsutsui investigates the events surrounding his ancestor Junkei's role at Yamazaki and his alleged betrayal of Mitsuhide. In a poignant scene, Tsutsui, the author who has stepped into his own story as protagonist and narrator, visits Dōgatōge, the site where Junkei is said to have stood watching the battle between Mitsuhide and Hideyoshi before ultimately deciding to abandon the losing Akechi forces to join Hideyoshi. What Tsutsui finds there, however, is a "drive-in" restaurant, which has been carved into the side of the famous hill where Junkei once stood (Figure 3). When the narrator Tsutsui tells the owner that all historical sources indicate that Junkei never in fact visited the spot, the owner refuses to believe him, despite the overwhelming evidence he presents, saying, "If Junkei really didn't come here, then why is the story of Dōgatōge Junkei passed on even today?"[16] This is precisely the question that Tsutsui seeks to address in "Yamazaki." Why is it necessary to glorify stories of the past and rely on history for a sense of national identity? What if these lionized figures turn out not to be heroic after all? By switching seamlessly between standard historical fiction storytelling and parody, Tsutsui forces readers to reconsider how history is analyzed and mobilized and to grapple with these questions.

Beyond problematizing the sources that inform readers' understandings of the past, Tsutsui's "Yamazaki" is filled with references to modern technology, and two-thirds of the way into the narrative his account seems to lose track of historical time altogether. After a fairly traditional recounting of the events surrounding the peace treaty Hideyoshi brokers with the Mōri clan before moving to avenge Nobunaga, the narrative shifts to a technologically advanced, pseudo–twentieth century. The first example of the intermingling of past and present comes at the end of Hideyoshi's long negotiations with the Mōri, who were under siege in Takamatsu Castle and surrounded by water. Instead of turning his attention to preparing the troops for departure,

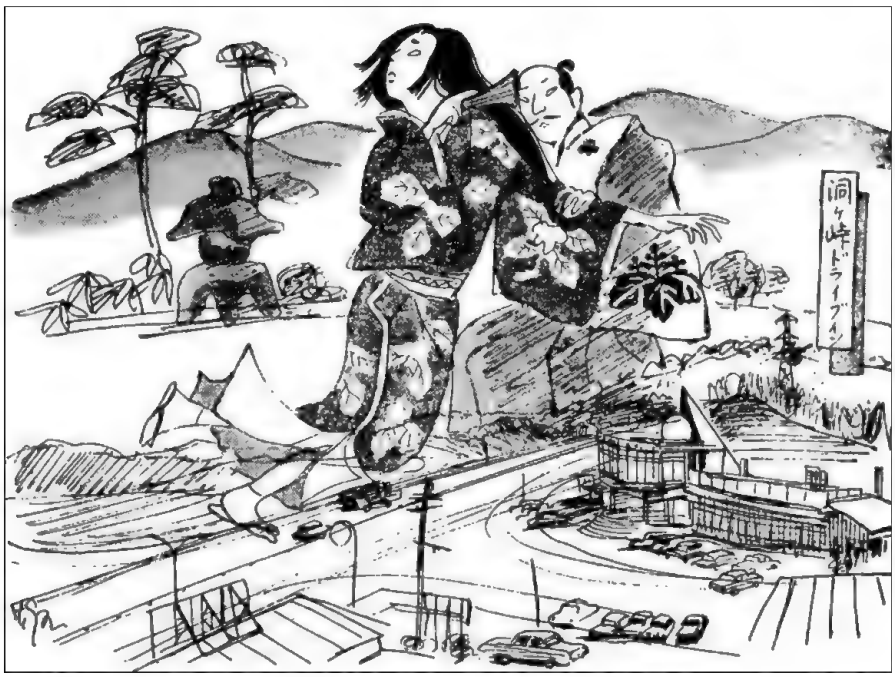


FIGURE 3. Illustration by Komatsu Hisako, originally published in Tsutsui Yasutaka, *Tsutsui Junkei, Shukan Bunshun* (November 11, 1968): 69.

Hideyoshi has a good night's sleep, slumbering well into the next day. When one of his men reminds him that he needs to hurry to secure reinforcements and catch up with Mitsuhide, he laughs: "According to you, everything is a problem of lack of time . . . Why write a letter when we can use the phone?" and then picks up a phone and tells the operator, "Connect me to Nakagawa in Ibaragi castle."[17] Subsequently, the reader is bombarded with references to modern technology such as telephones, taxis, bullet trains, and electric shavers.

The parody of technology works on two levels. First, it directly alters the type of story Tsutsui tells, reimagining the decisive factors involved in various significant moments in history. For example, the fact that Hideyoshi beat others to Yamazaki to avenge Nobunaga's death has generally been explained to be a result of his ability to orchestrate the swift and smooth signing of the peace treaty with the Mōri. Although the details of how this was executed have been contested, Hideyoshi's efficiency at this pivotal moment has been referenced as proof of his leadership skills. Additionally, he was able to amass his troops and move them quickly, making him the first to reach Mitsuhide. In Tsutsui's account, technological advancements aid

Hideyoshi on both of these fronts. First, technology enables him to quickly spread false information and purposely misdirect others, so he could get to Mitsuhide before anyone else. For example, when he calls fellow Oda retainer Nakagawa Kiyohide:

> In no time, Nakagawa Kiyohide answered: "Hello?"
> "Is this Nakagawa? It's Hashiba . . . "[18]
> "How are you? Did you hear about Honnō-ji?"
> "Yes, I know about it, but don't worry. Oda evade Akechi's evil plans."
> "Oh, is that so? I am glad to hear it. Alright!"
> "He has retreated all the way to Ōtsu. I am on my way there now."
> "Where are you?"
> "I have made my way to Numa. [19]

Of course, all this is fabricated. Tsutsui's Hideyoshi lies about Nobunaga's fate and location to buy time. This intentional misdirection ensures that Nakagawa does not panic and join the opposing forces of Akechi Mitsuhide and keeps him from inadvertently disclosing valuable information to potential rivals. That he was able to dispense with this ruse so quickly by phone gives Hideyoshi a considerable advantage.

The technology also allows Hideyoshi to move quickly. After talking to Nakagawa, Hideyoshi sets about securing *shinkansen* (bullet train) tickets for the thousands of men who are serving him, and, according to Tsutsui's version of events, his ability to get enough tickets for all of his thirty thousand troops is the primary reason he reaches Mitsuhide so quickly. A conversation between Kanbei and Hideyoshi seems intended by the author to illustrate Hideyoshi's coolness under pressure and good strategic planning, not to mention his ability to understand and use the technology available to him:

> If the trains departing from Okayama are all Hikari, I will buy enough tickets for everyone to travel by Hikari, but if the tickets are sold in advance, there are likely none left. To buy thirty thousand tickets, we will probably need to buy all of the tickets available today, tomorrow, and possibly even the day after.
>
> We will have to be separated. Of course that can't be helped. Hurry and buy the tickets and then send Ukita Tadaie and Hashiba Hidekatsu and their men on the bullet trains today so their two brigades can serve as the advanced party . . . We will leave on trains tomorrow.[20]

The strengths typically emphasized in other fictional accounts of Hideyoshi's life are apparent here—he is optimistic and good at making plans and giving orders—but the setting is quite different. The technology Tsutsui describes redefines the way these warriors communicate and do battle. More important, it offers a new explanation for how Hideyoshi was able to carry out his revenge attack.

Second, these references to technology immediately connect Tsutsui's retelling of Hideyoshi's pursuit of Akechi Mitsuhide to 1970s Japan. While reinforcing the intertextual and accretionary nature of traditional Japanese storytelling, Tsutsui's subtle and not-so-subtle reinterpretations of the gaps in historical sources allow for innovative changes to the popular conception of Hideyoshi that heavily influence not only his narrative but also the way his readers approach historical narrative, forcing them to engage with the familiar history of Hideyoshi and his career while simultaneously questioning their understandings of the past.

The sudden appearance of modern technology is both shocking and unsettling, and the juxtaposition of all these modern conveniences with Hideyoshi's rash, often violent, reactions to the delays he encounters forces the reader to reconsider the meaning of progress and the idea that Hideyoshi should be viewed as a hero and a model for leadership. When Hideyoshi confronts the station manager about the fact that he will not be able to get all his troops on the bullet trains in less than four or five days, due to crowded train schedules,

> [The manager says,] "I am so sorry," and bows so low that his forehead is flat on the floor. "I feel morally responsible for this situation. As a representative of the national railroad, I express my sincerest apologies." He then immediately commits seppuku in that very spot.[21]

This scene simultaneously references the Japan National Railway's commitment to absolute precision regarding time schedules in the 1960s and 1970s and provides a humorous yet critical view of the double-edged nature of technological advancement. Hideyoshi does not balk at this seemingly anachronistic behavior. The irony of this scene in which someone in a precisely managed, technologically advanced job commits such an antiquated act emphasizes Tsutsui's two-fold point: sixteenth-century heroes do not belong in twentieth-century Japan, and unquestioning overreliance on technology will get Japan into trouble. In fact, the more Hideyoshi relies on technology, the more problems he has, and his dependence on unreliable technology leads

to confusion and disruption. Not long into their trip, the electricity goes out, and Hideyoshi and his men are stuck on the dark, motionless train for four hours. When the conductor commits suicide to take responsibility for the delay, "The buffet chef had no choice but to go to his aid. The waitresses clung to him crying, and one of them stabbed herself in the throat with a fork, following him to the grave."[22] This dramatic moment caused by the inefficiencies of technology leaves Hideyoshi unfazed. He nonchalantly says, "We are still in Okayama prefecture . . . We are not far from Numa Castle. Since it can't be helped, let's get off here and spend the night at the castle. I'm tired."[23] The following day, the trains are running and all seems well until they reach flooded track. Dissatisfied with the new conductor's explanation for why they are unable to proceed, Kanbei says, "'Stop making excuses and hurry up and get the train running' . . . He then stood, drew his sword and cut the elderly conductor. 'Gasp,' split through the forehead . . . the conductor collapsed onto the knees of a man who looked like a newlywed groom."[24] Thick with satire, Tsutsui's introduction of a technologically advanced sixteenth century criticizes both the postwar, twentieth-century tendency to glorify new technology and the emerging discourse on sixteenth-century samurai as leadership models (Figure 4).

THE SUDDEN APPEARANCE OF MODERN TECHNOLOGY IS BOTH SHOCKING AND UNSETTLING, AND THE JUXTAPOSITION OF ALL THESE MODERN CONVENIENCES WITH HIDEYOSHI'S RASH, OFTEN VIOLENT, REACTIONS TO THE DELAYS HE ENCOUNTERS FORCES THE READER TO RECONSIDER THE MEANING OF PROGRESS AND THE IDEA THAT HIDEYOSHI SHOULD BE VIEWED AS A HERO AND A MODEL FOR LEADERSHIP.

In Tsutsui's story, even though Hideyoshi makes progress both physically toward Yamazaki and symbolically toward control of the realm, when his actions and the actions of those around him are placed within the context of a clean bullet train car, they seem unbelievably barbaric. In this way, Tsutsui subverts the business manuals and Kasahara's salesman hero, making Hideyoshi instead into a shallow, impulsive accessory to numerous unnecessary deaths. This ironic reading of Hideyoshi's behavior asks the reader to question what it means to build a modern, technologically advanced consumer society on the shoulders of "heroes" like Hideyoshi.

Ultimately, Tsutsui argues for a more nuanced understanding of the past that challenges the type of interpretation offered by writers like Kasahara Ryōzō. Kasahara's *Sarariiman shusse Taikōki* series introduces the idea of Hideyoshi as a salaryman hero in a way that sold books and movie tickets to

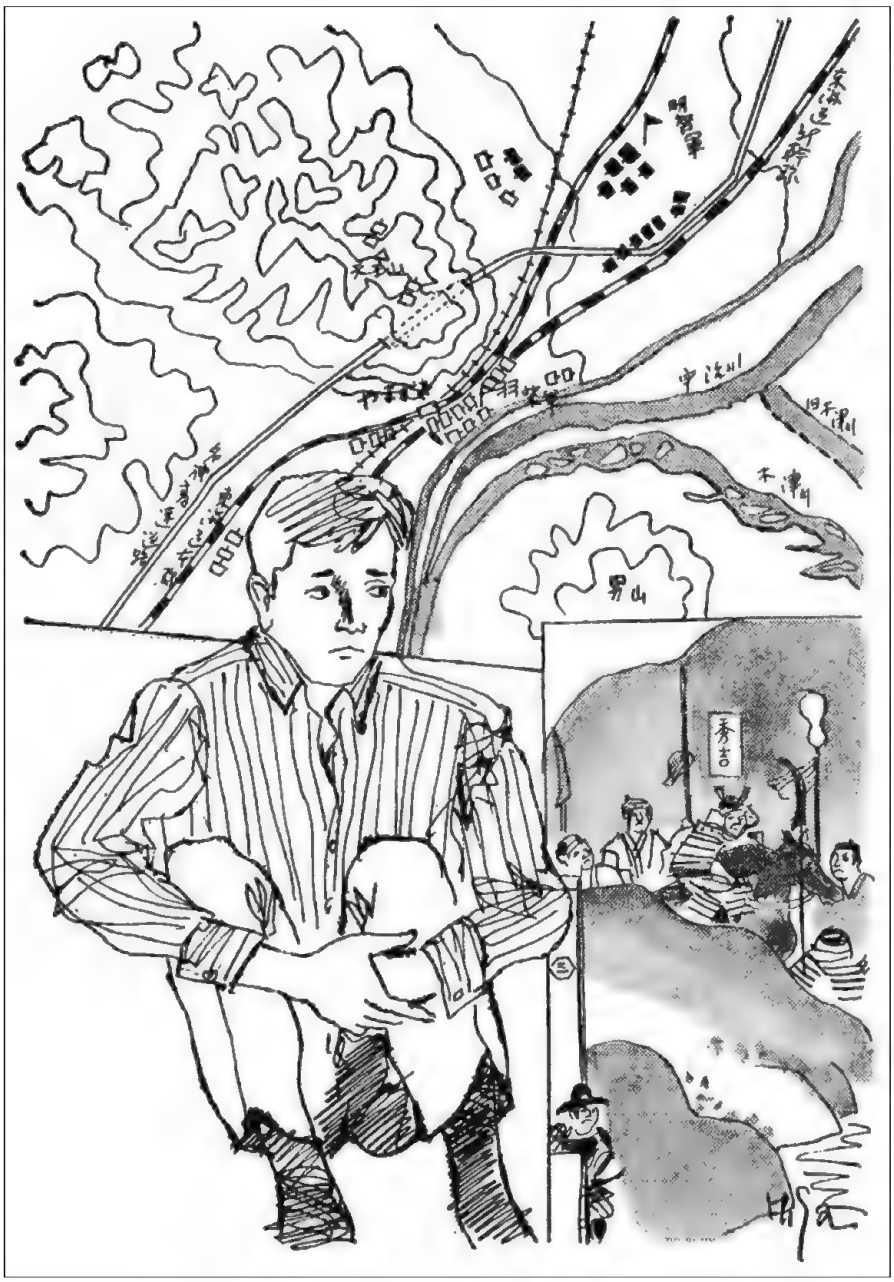


FIGURE 4. Illustration by Komatsu Hisako, originally published in Tsutsui Yasutaka, *Tsutsui Junkei*, *Shukan Bunshun* (September 23, 1968): 65

a general public intent on overcoming the past and succeeding economically in a new age. Throughout the early postwar period, historical fiction writers develop this idea of Hideyoshi as a model for business leaders without questioning the potential pitfalls of such an interpretation. It is not until Tsutsui Yasutaka's deconstruction of the historical fiction genre and his counterfactual rewritings of the history surrounding Hideyoshi that this tendency to glorify Hideyoshi as a business model is called into question. Tsutsui's criticism of Hideyoshi, told in a bifurcated alternate reality, offers the first hints of a discourse in which Hideyoshi appears to be fundamentally flawed and allows for alternative ways of thinking about the links between history, the present, and Japan's possible futures.

Notes

1. Besides appearing in various historical manga series, including *Sono toki rekishi ga ugoita* (That's when history moved) published by Shueisha, Hideyoshi is also the subject of manga series such as *Hideyoshi de gozaru* (I am Hideyoshi) published in *Weekly Young Jump* starting in 2007; *Isetsu* Taikōki (Taikōki, a different interpretation) published by Gakken starting in 2005; and the *Toyotomi Hideyoshi ihon Taikōki (*Toyotomi Hideyoshi: A *Taikōki* imitation) series published by Kodansha Comics in 1995.

2. Even today, Hideyoshi regularly appears in lists of the top ten (world) leaders of all time published by magazines such as *Purejidento,* with its readership of company leaders and CEOs, and it is in the immediate postwar period that Hideyoshi comes to symbolize "*shonin no saikaku,*" merchant resourcefulness.

3. By the end of the war, Japan's economy was near financial ruin, and many industries had been brought to a standstill due to damaged manufacturing plants and lack of materials. The gross national product (GNP) in 1946 and 1947 declined to sixty percent of prewar levels, and people struggled to survive, facing a severe lack of resources.

4. In all, there were five movies that Kasahara turned into novels: *Sarariiman shusse Taikōki* (1957), *Zoku sarariiman shusse Taikōki* (1957, A *Taikōki* of a salaryman rising up in the world continued), *Zokuzoku sarariiman shusse Taikōki* (1958, Even more *Taikōki* of a salaryman rising up in the world), *Sarariiman shusse Taikōki—kachō ichibankura* (1959, A *Taikōki* of a salaryman rising up in the world, head of the number one storehouse), and *Sarariiman shusse Taikōki—kanketsu-hen—hanamuko buchō* (1960, A *Taikōki* of a salaryman rising up in the world—the final episode—the bridegroom department head). Two publishing companies, Shun'yō Bunko and Kōfū-sha, eventually published book versions of the entire series. Kōfū-sha was the first to offer novels based on the movies with a two-volume series published in 1957 and 1958 and rereleased in 1962 that covered the events of the first three movies. A separate *bunkobon* (small paperback) book version published by Shun'yō Bunko covers the same material as the Kōfū-sha version but also includes episodes from the final two movies. The Shun'yō Bunko books are: *Sarariiman shusse Taikōki* (1960, A *Taikōki* of a salaryman rising up in the world), *Sarariiman funsensu: Sarariiman*

shusse Taikōki dai 2 bu (1960, A *Taikōki* of a salaryman rising up in the world, part 2), and *Zoku sarariiman shusse Taikoki: kachō ichiban kura *hanamuko buchō nanbaa wan* (1961, A *Taikōki* of a salaryman rising up in the world: head of the number one storehouse, and 1961, The bridegroom department head, number one). Where there is overlap between the novels published from the two different companies, the content is identical. The texts used for this project were published by Shun'yō Bunko.

5. The word *shusse* can be defined alternatively as success in life, advancement in one's career, rising to greatness, or making a name for oneself.

6. "Boys, be ambitious" is a phrase made famous by William Smith Clark (1826–86), science professor and later president at Massachusetts Agricultural College (University of Massachusetts at Amherst) who served as the first president of the Sapporo Agricultural College in Hokkaido. Upon his departure from Hokkaido many years before, he charged his students with the words: "Boys, be ambitious for Christ!" An abbreviation of this, "Boys, be ambitious!" is perhaps his greatest legacy in Japan.

7. Kasahara, *Sarariiman shusse Taikōki,* 46, 219; *Zoku Sarariiman shusse Taikōki,* 72, 193; and *Sarariiman funsensu: Sarariiman shusse Taikōki dai 2 bu,* 2.

8. Andrew Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan: From Tokugawa Times to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 245–46.

9. Elise Tipton, *Modern Japan: A Social and Political History* (New York, Routledge, 2002), 180. She based her analysis on Yutaka Kosai, "The Postwar Japanese Economy, 1945–1973," in *The Cambridge History of Japan,* vol. 6, 494–537 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

10. Originally published as: Tsutsui Yasutaka, "Yamazaki," *Bessatsu Shōsetsu Shinchō* (April 1972): 60–72. Citations for this chapter are taken from Tsutsui Yasutaka, "Yamazaki," in *Jidai shōsetsu* (Historical fiction) (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron-sha, 1994), 365–86.

11. Ozaki Hotsuki, "Tsutsui Yasutaka no rekishi ninshiki" (Tsutsui Yasutaka's concept of history), *Kokubungaku: kaishaku to kyōzai no kenkyū* 26, no. 11 (August 1981): 71.

12. Tsutsui, *Jidai shōsetsu,* 365.

13. In 1871, with *haihan chiken,* domains were reorganized into prefectures. After many changes, the prefectural system evolved into what it is today.

14. See Tsutsui, *Jidai shōsetsu,* 379, for example.

15. Ibid., 365. Kuroda Kanbei was from a family of prominent *daimyo* in Harima province (modern-day Hyōgō prefecture) and served Hideyoshi until 1589. He became a Christian in 1585, which makes the quotation cited by Tsutsui even more unbelievable since Oda died in 1582.

16. Tsutsui Yasutaka, *Tsutsui Junkei* (Tokyo: Shinkō-sha, 1969), 114.

17. Ibid., 378.

18. At this point, Toyotomi Hideyoshi is known as Hashiba Tokichirō.

19. Tsutsui, *Jidai shōsetsu,* 378–79. Ōtsu is modern-day Shiga prefecture, in the opposite direction from Kyoto from where Hideyoshi is in modern-day Okayama prefecture.

20. Ibid., 379–80. Ukita Tadaie (1573–1655). Hashiba Hidekatsu (1568–86).

21. Ibid., 380.

22. Ibid., 382.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid., 383.

MATTHEW PENNEY

A Nation Restored: The Utopian Future of Japan's Far Right

Most scholarly writing about Japanese neonationalism focuses on what it denies or denounces. The emphasis falls on how pundits and politicians decry Japan's postwar history as delegitimized by the "American-authored" constitution and deny the suffering of Korean comfort women and the Japanese army's victimization of civilians at Nanking. Behind efforts to deny and discredit, however, neonationalist writing does try to construct something positive—a vision of the future in which far-right cultural and political positions "save" the nation and build a uniquely Japanese utopia.

The essay below is a fiction constructed by bringing together the most common elements of far-right myth making in Japan's popular media. Built around the fantastic conceit that the right's favorite assumptions and predictions have come true, the fiction takes the form of a history of Japan, 2015 to 2050, written in the middle of the twenty-first century. It thus offers a summary of the ideas of the incredibly prolific rightist culture machine. While these ideas might not find full expression on television or in best-selling newspapers such as *Yomiuri, Asahi,* and *Mainichi,* the texts that espouse them crowd bookstore shelves and convenience store pulp nonfiction racks, effectively forming a type of alternative public sphere. This essay

constitutes an attempt to extract a narrative and perspective shared by right-wing writers, the utopian vision of the future that they hold in common. I have added numerous endnotes to the fiction to give a sense of where the perspectives drawn on are situated within contemporary right discourses.

BEHIND EFFORTS TO DENY AND DISCREDIT, HOWEVER, NEONATIONALIST WRITING DOES TRY TO CONSTRUCT SOMETHING POSITIVE—A VISION OF THE FUTURE IN WHICH FAR-RIGHT CULTURAL AND POLITICAL POSITIONS "SAVE" THE NATION AND BUILD A UNIQUELY JAPANESE UTOPIA.

Examining the imaginative emplotment of rightist desires in future history sheds light on the way that Japanese right-wingers view historical causality. Salient in a wide range of rightist writings is a powerful ethno-cultural essentialism. Change is not something that comes from forward thinking, new possibilities, or creative alternatives, but rather from turning to the past. "Restoring Japan,"[1] a "Heisei Restoration,"[2] "Escaping from the Postwar Regime"[3] (toward a new prewar regime?), and embracing "True History" are all major threads of political speech and pop nationalist writing. All look to the past to provide the panacea for Japan's ills, to offer a source of productive destruction of everything held to be wrong with the postwar era. This theme and its teleological presumptions come into stark contrast when framed in a single story.

There are important differences of opinion on the far right. Common, however, is a conflict-based view of international affairs and an obsession with the idea that Japanese sovereignty, cultural and territorial, is under assault, necessitating a more powerful state and a return to "traditional values." These traditional values are, of course, ethereal, and their definitions can oscillate wildly, even in the works of a single author. What remains consistent, however, is the idea that a return to a "truer past" is the key to Japan's future.

In this exercise of analytical fiction, I have attempted to highlight the right's most frequently repeated themes. Even if some of the authors cited here do not resort to the same themes, they publish in the same magazines, such as *Will* and *Seiron,* and with the same publishers, like PHP and Wac; they endorse each other's work and have generally formed an alternative public sphere in which the kinds of assertions used to assemble this account are not only common but the norm. This text relies heavily on the words of Tamogami Toshio. Tamogami has more than 200,000 followers on Twitter. In the 2013 Tokyo gubernatorial election, he finished fourth out of five major candidates but placed second among voters in their twenties, placing him among the right-wing pundits who have the most substantial public presence.[4]

Prime Minister Abe Shinzō and other elite politicians are more careful in their public statements than pop nationalist authors who mobilize their readers by expressing sentiments of outrage and victimhood. Abe selectively cultivates conciliatory rhetoric, and in some contexts, such as an interview with *Foreign Affairs* in 2013, has stuck to the line of official contrition, saying, "I have expressed a number of times the deep remorse that I share for the tremendous damage and suffering Japan caused in the past to the people of many countries, particularly in Asia."[5] He has also repeated this point domestically. In key sections in this future history, however, I have included material from the writings and interviews of Abe that illustrate that, despite his cultivation of a rhetorical style of "reasonableness" to appeal to the mainstream, it is clear from comments posted on far-right sites that he believes, or at least strategically employs, some of their same assumptions about culture, history, and causality. In addition, as a second example from elite conservative politics, I use the writings of Inada Tomomi, the Minister of State for Regulatory Reform in Abe's cabinet. Her ties with leading revisionist Watanabe Shōichi, who serves as the head of her citizen support group "Tomomi-Gumi" (The Tomomi Group), and her extreme rhetoric on history and gender, show the tight links between elite conservative politics and the extreme right of public discourse.

A NATION RESTORED: A HISTORY OF JAPAN, 2015–2050

From Masochism to Pride

In the first decades of the 2000s, Japan faced dangers greater than any since the foundation of the country in 660 BC.[6]

After recovering in the mid-2000s, the Japanese economy entered a second period of decline because of the 2008 global financial crisis that originated in the United States. A major cause of Japan's continued economic malaise, however, was the masochistic view of history. More than any other country, Japan's schools failed to teach strong feelings of connection to our homeland.[7] Textbooks were filled with stories of horror, making men of past generations out to be monsters.[8] When the "New History Textbook" movement overcame the discursive terrorism of anti-Japanese fascism aligned against it and Japan's true history was finally taught to young people, the economy rapidly improved.[9] Prime Minister Abe Shinzō played an instrumental role in

this shift despite the left-wing mass media's "Abe Bashing."[10] False stories like the Nanking Massacre were only included in Japanese textbooks because of pressure from China. With the rise of Abe and other politicians unafraid to express pride in Japan and its history, fabricated stories were removed and replaced by positive examples of strength and self-sacrifice like that of Admiral Tōgō Heihachirō saving the nation by defeating the Russians in 1905, which left-wing educators had long hidden from Japanese children.[11]

The Imperial Rescript on Education is like the DNA of the Japanese soul. It is a summary of our essential nature that was cultivated by our history and our land.[12] Feelings of restraint and self-sacrifice are at the heart of being Japanese and proper moral instruction built around the Imperial Rescript brought them back after a long period of decline. The Imperial Rescript on Education helped Ronald Reagan save American education in the 1980s, and Margaret Thatcher hung a copy of it on her wall, looking to it every day for inspiration.[13] In Japan, the document was even more powerful because it manifests our essential national character.

Our efforts to set the historical record straight in American courts helped to restore national pride. Japan proved that the so-called comfort women were simply highly paid prostitutes who made more money than Japanese military officers. They were not coerced. In fact, they rushed to sign up.[14] Using the courts to establish historical truth and appealing to foreigners, Japan won the information war against China and Korea and successfully convinced countries like the United States and Australia that Japan had been unfairly slandered after World War II.[15] Firsthand testimony is not enough to establish the facts of history. Documentary evidence that can stand up in court is needed to win the struggle over the past, and anti-Japanese elements never had any real proof of wrongdoing. Politicians like Inada Tomomi learned from Turkey's example about how to stand up to foreign pressure on historical issues.[16]

The use of the fabricated "Nanking Massacre" in the information war against Japan ended when we were able to establish that everyone who was in the city at the time testified that no massacre took place. Only people who were not in the city claim there were mass killings. The father of former Prime Minister Mori, Mori Shigeki, for instance, who took part in the Battle of Nanking, confirms of course that no massacre took place.[17]

The introduction of more comparative material also caused an important shift in history education. Studying the history of atrocities committed by England, the United States, France, the Soviet Union, and China, students realized that Japanese history was really not bad.[18] Japanese children were

taught the fact that blacks in America did not even have the right to vote before World War II.[19] Esteemed historian Watanabe Shōichi wrote, "When we survey the pre-WWII period, colored people all over the world, be they Chinese or be they Indian, kowtowed to whites. They were beaten with whips and whimpered and whelped, and they stripped naked and performed such acts as crawling about in front of supermarkets."[20] On top of all this, our students also learned that the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were the greatest crimes against humanity in history. America had no choice but to make Japan look evil in order to justify its own atrocities.[21]

NATIONS THAT CANNOT RECOGNIZE THE SACRIFICES AND EFFORTS OF PAST GENERATIONS AND CARRY ON THEIR QUALITIES CANNOT SURVIVE.

The elimination of false history also had a powerful impact on foreign affairs. We were able to build a strong partnership with India. Indians recognized Japan's role in bringing freedom to the peoples of Asia who had been dominated by white imperialism in the mid-twentieth century. The legacies of esteemed men such as Radhabinod Pal, who recognized the greatness of Japan's sacrifice, fostered stronger ties.[22] With new confidence in its past, Japan took on its rightful role as leader in Southeast Asia as well.

Proud history also spread outside schools. Placing a copy of the *Kojiki* (Record of ancient matters) in every hotel room was one of many measures used to restore the confidence and traditional beliefs of the Japanese people.[23]

True history allowed Japan to escape from the postwar regime that had long undermined national pride. Nations that cannot recognize the sacrifices and efforts of past generations and carry on their qualities cannot survive. It was through the truth of the past that Japan overcame the national crisis of the early twenty-first century and entered a new period of prosperity.

China Collapse

As Japan overcame masochistic history and other threats from the inside, politicians turned their attention to external dangers. From 2010, China showed its true colors by bullying Japan and other countries like Vietnam and the Philippines.

In the wake of officially sanctioned riots in 2012, violations of our sovereign territory, and other acts of terrorism against us, Japan cut all trade and other economic ties with China. Ninety-nine percent of Chinese people did not even know what the Manchurian Incident or Senkaku Islands were, and

the Chinese government clearly manufactured the riots to mask their own crimes.[24] Despite the fact that China was Japan's largest trading partner, the Japanese economy suffered only a 0.33 percent decline, from which it quickly recovered.[25] The blow to China was far more severe due to their reliance on Japanese technology.

As Prime Minister Abe correctly ascertained, the Chinese Communist Party had no source of legitimacy apart from the fiction that they had defeated Japan in war. This is why they kept playing the history card.[26] Economic growth aside, anti-Japanese feelings were the pillar of Chinese nationalism. When this mythological foundation was undermined by Japan's use of true history to counter Chinese propaganda, China's one-party rule collapsed.[27] When the Chinese people learned the truth, nothing could hold back their feelings of resentment. For Japan, true history offered a new beginning, but it also spelled the end of China's drive for hegemony and its desire to carve up Japanese territory.

Since China is culturally inclined to bully the weak and back down from the strong, an increase in Japanese military spending effectively put a stop to China's provocative actions.[28] Tamogami Toshio and other strategists correctly deduced that China would simply back down when faced with a stronger Japan, and that an arms race in the Asia-Pacific would make military conflict far less likely.[29] Japan maintained its alliance with the United States but restored national pride and built awareness that Japanese sovereignty must be protected by Japanese.[30] Revising the Constitution, particularly Article 9, which made Japan helpless in the face of foreign threats and utterly reliant on the United States, brought back our independence and allowed the Japanese spirit to soar again. American troops were gradually withdrawn from Japan even though the alliance was maintained.[31] Japan also succeeded in increasing its influence in international affairs by developing nuclear weapons.[32] Previously, Japan could not have been called a real democracy because the lack of openness to pro-nuclear arguments was a violation of free speech.[33]

With a new intelligence network in place, Japan managed to exploit its insights into Chinese culture, such as "When China tells the truth, they always say it in a small voice. When China lies, they always say it in a loud voice."[34] With its insider knowledge of the essence of Chinese culture and other cultures, Japanese planners succeeded in effectively predicting how they would act and used this knowledge to protect Japanese sovereignty. They also realized that the Anglo-Saxons are a fundamentally warlike people, entirely different from the Japanese who are the most peaceful people in history, and had to be watched carefully despite the U.S.–Japan alliance.[35]

When Japan took a stance against Chinese aggression and historical untruths, China's decline was inevitable. China's GDP figures had been massively inflated, and the country could not keep up with a resurgent Japan.[36] The disproportionately low level of China's GDP devoted to consumption meant that ordinary people did not become prosperous, and China became unstable.[37] A number of other factors, such as center–periphery wealth disparities, the organization of China into distinct economic blocs, the bank crash, and ethnic tensions, led to the breakup of the Chinese state.[38] It was due to their essential kindness that the Japanese people did not put pressure on China earlier.

The Tokyo Olympics and the Japanese Century

Upon the neutralization of the Chinese threat, Japanese leaders like Abe Shinzō turned their attention to other issues. By 2020, when Tokyo triumphantly hosted the Olympic Games, it became clear that many of the problems trotted out by pessimists and Japan bashers had not really been problems at all. After the Great Eastern Japan Earthquake of 2011, the Japanese public, misled by the mass media, had begun to call for the elimination of nuclear power, even though not a single radiation specialist confirmed that the radiation leak was harmful to human health.[39] Rather than harming people, the radiation leak from the Fukushima Dai-ichi power plant actually improved the health of people across the prefecture.[40] The mistaken anti-nuclear direction was abandoned, and Japan was able to secure the energy needed to support growth.

Government efforts alleviated the problem of costs associated with the aging society by encouraging women to leave the workforce and take up the traditional role of caring for children and elderly parents in the home.[41] Government-sponsored research groups had greatly exaggerated the issue of declining population in the first place, creating a crisis out of nothing simply to secure more funding.[42] Raising the retirement age resolved the pension issue.[43]

Champions of the new Japan, like Tamogami Toshio, looked back with nostalgia to a time in when Japanese men were manly, finding their life's purpose in working hard for their country. Women are different. As Tamogami wrote, "For women, it was fine if they just graduated from middle school. Not one of the mothers of such great men as Fukuzawa Yūkichi, Okuma Shigenobu, Tōgō Heihachirō, Kobayashi Jutarō, and Gotō Shinpei even went to middle school. If the men were strong, that was enough."[44]

By throwing off the shackles of naïve thinking biased toward peace and unarmed neutrality, Japan put an end to the incessant bullying that it had

endured at the hands of other countries. This had a profound effect on the Japanese psyche. For example, Japanese boys proved more willing to fight to resolve conflicts and to defend others, and thus bullying in school ceased to be a problem.[45] The old prewar value of "straightening them out with iron fists" brought order and discipline back to schools.[46]

THE JAPANESE STATE GRASPED THE TRUE NATURE OF THE CHINESE—THEY FORCE THEIR CULTURE UPON EVERYONE ELSE, DO NOT ASSIMILATE, AND NEVER ADMIT THEY ARE WRONG—AND RESPONDED ACCORDINGLY.

In the early 2000s, Japan saw terrifying changes in its social environment. There were women who would not even say "excuse me" if they bumped into someone on the street, and women smoking in train stations came to outnumber men. This lack of proper courtesy hid darker truths. This situation stemmed from dangerous and unhealthy efforts to make laws enforcing equality between men and women, which replaced Japan's common sense, long-held ideas with radical ideology.[47] The proposal for legalizing separate surnames for husbands and wives presented one serious attempt to destroy Japan's social foundation. As Tamogami Toshio wrote, "It is natural that women who marry will feel joy at receiving their husband's name . . . Only women who have never been loved by a man would be for separate surnames."[48]

Robotics, together with the creativity of the Japanese people evidenced in their long tradition of *monozukuri* (making things) and attention to detail, enabled Japan to prosper without immigration. Successive governments moved to vanquish lingering threats from outsiders. Japan placed strict restrictions on the number of Chinese tourists and residents, because they increased crime and carried disease.[49] Limiting contact was a necessary measure, as many people felt uneasy at the presence of so many Chinese among us.[50] The Japanese state grasped the true nature of the Chinese—they force their culture upon everyone else, do not assimilate, and never admit they are wrong—and responded accordingly.[51] Chinese were barred from buying shares of Japanese media businesses when it became clear that they were trying to take over and flood Japan with pro-China propaganda.[52] Japan faced genuine danger upon the shift to the irresponsible Democratic Party government. Failed Democratic Party Prime Minister Hatoyama Yukio said, "The land of Japan does not belong only to the Japanese people."[53] Only by acting against such nonsense could Japan be safeguarded. Japan realized that the Chinese government planned to flood Japan with immigrants loyal to China and buy land and manipulate local elections in order to take over Japan piece by piece.[54] The new restrictions effectively countered such aggression. Japan truly ran

the risk of having misguided "human rights" laws erode our national fabric. There is no better example than that of allowing foreign women to apply for Japanese citizenship for their children, which actually happened when a Chinese woman gave birth to a Japanese man's child out of wedlock.[55] Vigilant citizens and politicians knew that these children would be taken back to China and become spies against Japan, and so it was declared illegal.[56] Other efforts to undermine Japan's prosperity and sovereignty by foreigners, such as abuse of the welfare system by resident Koreans, were also stopped.[57] The concept of "human rights" posed one of the greatest threats to our country.[58]

National pride restored the work ethic of Japanese youth. They no longer slacked off on the job or quit after three years.[59] Japanese companies, unlike those of brutal Western capitalists, responded by taking care of people. U.S. companies were only concerned with short-term profits and were run for the benefit of the CEOs, who reaped huge bonuses. Japanese companies took the long view and prospered.[60] Japan had no need for a wealthy elite or low-class freeloaders; it prospered because of a mass middle class that understood the value of self-reliance and hard work.[61] Japanese companies cultivated a remarkable degree of trust and depth of human compassion.[62]

The concept of *shimin* (citizens) posed as serious a threat to national sovereignty as the concept of "human rights." The left exploited the notion of "citizens" to suggest that people can transcend concepts like nationality, and *minzoku* (race or ethnicity) and live together in peace. The concept of *kokumin* (nationals) replaced this naïve view in Japan's public discourse through an increase in healthy nationalism as well as a correct understanding of national sovereignty and of the responsibility of every national to defend it.[63] In the second decade of the twenty-first century, the best-selling novels of Hyakuta Naoki helped transform masochistic views of Japanese history into positive ones by imparting feelings of respect for the sacrifices of our forebearers. Hyakuta's writings provided a correct interpretation of the importance of individual and national sacrifice in war and a cornerstone of Japanese history, and indeed Prime Minister Abe Shinzō found in them "the importance of offering up one's life for others."[64] An idealistic concept like "international citizens" has never existed anywhere in the world, in the past or in the present.[65] Real peace comes from a clear sense of national borders and ethnic and cultural distinctions.[66]

The ultimate triumph of this period of history was the return of the emperor to his rightful place in Japanese society. There were those who wished to ignore the purity of the imperial line going back countless generations, and how it formed the core of Japanese culture and bound together the Japanese

people.[67] Unlike kings and emperors in the Western tradition whose positions were based on power and force and who prospered at the expense of the people, the benevolence of the Japanese emperors ensured prosperity for all. The imperial institution emerged naturally in our country and has always been at its center. It is a treasure passed down for over two thousand years.[68] Democracy and constitutional law developed in the West due to the intolerable poverty and abuse inflicted upon the masses whenever a tyrant took the throne. Since Japan came about naturally as a country, placing legal restrictions on the imperial family proved unnecessary.[69] With the emperor as the focus for renewed national vigor, the twenty-first century truly became the Japanese century.[70]

Notes

1. "Nippon wo torimodosu"—"restore Japan" or "take back Japan"—was Abe Shinzō's Liberal Democratic Party's campaign slogan for the 2012 election that saw his return to power.

2. On its website, the rightist *Ishin no Kai* or "Japan Restoration Party" stresses restoration in its name and paints a picture of Japan as "weakened" and "frozen" and in need of restoration. Available at https://j-ishin.jp/about/outline/.

3. Abe used this phrase frequently between 2012 and 2014. "Dakkyo," which I translate here as "escape," also has the meaning of "to get out of".

4. "*Wakamono no Tamogami-shi shiji ni odoroki*" (Surprise at youth support for Tamogami), *Asahi Shimbun,* March 1, 2014, http://www.asahi.com/articles/DA3S11005066.html.

5. Abe Shinzō, "Japan Is Back," in *Foreign Affairs,* July/August 2013, http://www.foreignaffairs.com/discussions/interviews/japan-is-back.

6. Sakurai Makoto, *Nihon shinshoku* (The erosion of Japan) (Tokyo: Shinyūsha, 2010), 8.

7. Aoyama Shigeharu, *Bokura no sokoku* (Our homeland) (Tokyo: Fusōsha, 2011), 12.

8. Ibid.

9. Tweet by Tamogami Toshio, October 15, 2012. Tamogami says that masochistic history "spoiled" the Japanese economy. Tamogami and others assume that the content of grade school history textbooks has lifelong depressive effects that reduce a worker's productivity and thus national productivity. "Discursive terrorism" and "anti-Japanese fascism" are from Nishimura Kōyū, *Hannichi no shōtai* (The truth of anti-Japanese-ness) (Tokyo: Bungeisha, 2012), 12.

10. Tweet by Tamogami Toshio, September 28, 2012.

11. Tweet by Tamogami Toshio, May 17, 2012.

12. Ito Tetsuo, *Kyōiku Chokugo no shinjitsu* (The truth of the Imperial Rescript on Education) (Tokyo: Chichi Shuppan, 2011), 4. The Imperial Rescript on Education was promulgated in 1890 and played an important role in inculcating emperor-centered nationalism

and the idea of Japanese as subjects who live to serve the state. It was done away with as part of American occupation reforms following Japan's defeat in 1945, but rightists have looked to it as an ideal moral code ever since.

13. Totsuka Hiroshi and Tamogami Toshio, *Sore demo taibatsu ha hitsuyō da!* (Even now corporal punishment is necessary) (Tokyo: Wac, 2010), 78. These myths about the Imperial Rescript have been circulating in rightist discourse since the mid-2000s without evidence or citation.

14. Tweet by Tamogami Toshio, October 4, 2012. The Nippon Kaigi (Japan Conference), one of Japan's largest nationalist organizations of which Abe Shinzō and other key conservative politicians are members, has repeatedly echoed these denialist views. In 2011, the group produced a lengthy pamphlet entitled *Jūgun ianfu kyōusei renkō ha nakatta* (The military comfort women were not forced).

15. Tweet by Tamogami Toshio, October 4, 2012. Tamogami calls *Senkaku / Diaoyu* protests in front of the Japanese embassy in Australia and the placement of a billboard calling for Japan to apologize to the comfort women in New York's Times Square examples of a "war of information" that "Japan must not lose." Despite frequent assertions by Japanese neonationalists that "all countries have their own view of history," in other contexts they display a boundless confidence that foreigners can be "convinced" to subscribe to "true" Japanese views.

16. In *Nihon wo shii suru hitobito* (Those who would destroy Japan) Inada and Watanabe Shōichi, among the most prolific of Japan's history deniers, discuss the Turkish government's consistent denial of the Armenian genocide, praising them for "standing up" to foreign pressure and insisting that Japan should learn from this lesson. From these comments on Turkey, it appears as though the truth of past atrocities is beside the point—what is important is to perpetually struggle in defense of "the nation," lest as the title of the book implies, Japan be wiped out. See Inada Tomomi and Watanabe Shōichi, *Nihon wo shii suru hitobito* (Tokyo: PHP, 2008), 56.

17. Tweets by Tamogami Toshio, May 18, 2012. This is a direct translation of two tweets made by Tamogami. The "everyone" in this statement obviously includes only elite Japanese officers and even then is incorrect. I juxtapose this perspective with the denial of the value of historical testimony in the previous paragraph to illustrate how Japanese rightist authors fetishize documentary evidence in some contexts, using it, or its absence, to negate the testimony of Asian victims of Japanese wartime violence, while simultaneously claiming Japanese testimony, particularly by military and political elites, to be authoritative.

18. Tweet by Tamogami Toshio, September 30, 2012. Tamogami writes that comparison is necessary and asks whether Japanese history really looks "so bad" compared to the history of other countries. As with Nishio Kanji's *Kokumin no rekishi* (A history of the people of our nation) in the 1990s, many revisionists have emphasized spelling out the "negative" aspects of the history of others to cast Japan's history in a better light rather than focusing on "positive" aspects of Japanese history.

19. Tweet by Tamogami Toshio, September 17, 2012. Tamogami tacks this point on the end of a discussion of how "history is written by the winners." Of course, he is wrong here and is conflating the appalling situation that existed in some parts of the United States until the 1970s with the national whole. While in some southern states, literacy

tests and other forms of interference were widely used to disenfranchise African Americans, Tamogami is not interested in this history and simply uses race as a barb against American critics of Japan.

20. Watanabe Shōichi and Doi Takeo, *'Ijime' no kōzō* (An anatomy of bullying) (Tokyo: PHP, 2008), 56. These two sentences are a direct translation. Rightists like Watanabe consistently deploy historical narratives that highlight the barbarity of Western imperialism while simultaneously making colonial victims appear to be physically and morally weak, inferior to the Japanese who resisted. This construction of history is used to support assumptions about cultural hierarchy, past and present.

21. Tweet by Tamogami Toshio, June 8, 2012.

22. Kusaka Kimindo and Morijiri Sumio, *Kore kara ha Indo, to iu jidai* (The age of India starts now) (Tokyo: Wac, 2012).

23. Tweet by Tamogami Toshio, June 23, 2012. Tamogami has a close relationship with APA Hotel chain president Motoya Toshiya. Motoya has authored collections of aphorisms based on Japan's early myths and imperial history that are placed in every APA Hotel room.

24. Tweet by Tamogami Toshio, September 18, 2012.

25. Tweet by Tamogami Toshio, October 15, 2012. Japanese neonationalists frequently call for trade and all economic relations with China to be abandoned. While many have asserted that the Japanese economy would survive such a drastic step, Mitsuhashi Takaaki went further when he argued in the November 2012 edition of *Seiron* that the net GDP loss for Japan would be 0.33 percent, a number quickly picked up by Tamogami and others. Mitsuhashi makes some baroque arguments based around the idea of outsourced jobs and investment capital seamlessly returning to Japan and a decline in China's economic strength precipitated by this opening up of new export markets for Japan. Mitsuhashi effectively ignores the depth of economic interconnectivity to reach the 0.33 percent figure.

26. Abe Shinzō and Kobayashi Yoshinori, *Kibō no kuni Nippon* (Japan, country of hope) (Tokyo: Asuka Shinsha, 2010), 275. Abe argues here that the CCP will collapse without its foundation myth of victory over Japan and implies that winning "the history war" with China will hasten the party's demise.

27. Ibid., 275.

28. Tweet by Tamogami Toshio, October 12, 2012.

29. As in a tweet on July 28, 2012, Tamogami makes the point that military power is not for fighting but rather to back up negotiations. Among far-right pundits, there is surprisingly little consideration that a war with China is a real possible result of political brinksmanship and the expansion of arms spending. Military power is framed not in terms of fantasies of use but to build a fantasy of Japan walled off from outside influence, secure in cultural and territorial sovereignty. The result is a discourse that considers neither ways to more effectively practice foreign policy nor the possibility that violent confrontation could result.

30. Tweet by Tamogami Toshio, June 6, 2012.

31. Tweet by Tamogami Toshio, April 18, 2012.

32. Tweet by Tamogami Toshio, August 6, 2012.

33. Tweet by Tamogami Toshio, August 5, 2012. For the far right, "free speech" often

means "equal time" on the one hand and an ability to say anything without repercussions on the other. Here, Tamogami insinuates that the fact that antinuclear ideas have been unpopular is a violation of free speech. In general, nuclear armament is increasingly fetishized on the far right despite marginal public support.

34. Tweet by Tamogami Toshio, October 11, 2012. Tamogami and other neonationalist pundits frequently frame this sort of generalization as a guide for foreign affairs. It is difficult to establish what they would require from a stronger Japanese intelligence-gathering agency, but neonationalist writings rarely pay attention to individual Chinese, Korean, or other politicians or planners. The behavior of individuals is held up as indicative of distinct national/racial/cultural positions, and "intelligence" is framed in terms of using knowledge of this essence to predict behavior.

35. Kusaka Kimindo, *Otona no kuni no tame no sensōgaku* (War studies for a country of adults) (Tokyo: PHP, 2004), 92–98.

36. Tweet by Tamogami Toshio, October 8, 2012.

37. Tweet by Tamogami Toshio, August 26, 2012.

38. Miyazaki Masahiro, *Chugōku bunretsu nanatsu no riyū* (Seven reasons China will fragment) (Osaka: Hankyū Communications, 2009), 22–43.

39. Tweet by Tamogami Toshio, August 6, 2012.

40. Tweet by Tamogami Toshio, October 12, 2011.

41. Tweet by Tamogami Toshio, September 28, 2012.

42. Tweet by Tamogami Toshio, September 3, 2012.

43. Tweet by Tamogami Toshio, June 14, 2012.

44. Tweet by Tamogami Toshio, May 2, 2012.

45. Watanabe Shōichi and Doi Takeo, *'Ijime' no kōzō,* 55–56. These comments are Watanabe's.

46. Ibid., 41–42.

47. These sentences are an almost direct translation from Nishimura Kōyū, *Hannichi no shōtai* (The truth of anti-Japanese-ness) (Tokyo: Bungeisha, 2012), 16–17. The author makes these points in the introduction, positioning them as the central evidence for why Japanese society has declined.

48. Tamogami Toshio, "Waga kuni no gōhōteki nottori ga shinkōchū" (The legal takeover of our country proceeds apace), February 14, 2011, http://ameblo.jp/toshio-tamogami/entry-10800625592.html.

49. Bandō Tadanobu, *Nihon ha Chūgokujin no kuni ni naru* (Japan becomes a Chinese country) (Tokyo: Tokuma Shoten, 2012), 4–7. Bando argues that among crimes by foreigners, crimes by Chinese, which make up between 40 and 50 percent, are particularly out of control. He engages in twisty rhetoric here, suggesting that foreign crime is a particular threat to Japan without detailing how it is still a very small percentage of total crime.

50. On the front page of his website, Bandō says that his work is a must-read for people who feel this way. http://bandoutadanobu.com/.

51. Bandō argues on his website that understanding the true nature of the Chinese is necessary to protect the Japanese lifespace. Ibid.

52. Tamogami Toshio, "Waga kuni no gōhōteki nottori ga shinkōchū."

53. This is a favorite quote by rightists condemning the Democratic Party. See, for example, Watanabe Shōichi, *Nihon kokuron* (On Japan) (Tokyo: Chichi Shuppan, 2012), 10.

54. This is the major theme of Takarajima editors, *'Gaikokujin sanseiken' de Nihon ga nakunaru hi* (The day voting by foreigners causes Japan to vanish) (Tokyo: Takarajima-sha, 2010). The work even has a speculative short story in which a Chinese mayor is elected on a smaller Japanese island, and he breaks into evil laughter during his victory speech as People's Liberation Army commandos rappel down to begin occupation.

55. Key conservatives like Inada Tomomi use "human rights" as a dirty word and argue that the very concept is an outside assault on Japanese culture. They also assert that "human rights" are an assault on "collective rights," a concept that they associate with a presumed Japanese cultural essence, effectively the right for Japanese to be free to be Japanese. This concept negates pluralism. See, for example, Inada Tomomi and Kin Birei, "*Warera 'Jinken' 'Rekishi ninshiki' ni omonerazu*" (We won't bow to "human rights" or "historical awareness"), *Seiron,* October 2010.

56. Tamogami Toshio, "*Waga kuni no gōhōteki nottori ga shinkōchū.*"

57. Sakurai Makoto, *Nihon shinshoku,* 37–64.

58. Tamogami Toshio, "*Waga kuni no gōhōteki nottori ga shinkōchū.*"

59. For an account of conservative demonization of young people as lazy and a drain on the economy, see Horii Kenichirō, *Wakamono koroshi no jidai* (The era of killing the young) (Tokyo: Kodansha, 2006).

60. Kusaka Kimindo, *Chō-senshin koku Nihon ga sekai wo michibiku* (Super-developed country Japan will lead the world) (Tokyo: PHP, 2012), 240. Kusaka associates Japanese management practices with cultural characteristics. He views these as stable and a link to the past. He ignores, however, Japan's militarist capitalism that helped to push the country to disaster, and the excesses of the bubble era. Abe describes the Japanese economic model as being more humane and supporting "human dignity" and "multi-generational families," a point that despite his administration's gender-rights rhetoric seems to place women in the home as a fundamental Japanese value. See Abe and Hyakuta, *Nihon yo,* 73.

61. Ibid., 240. Here Kusaka fails to acknowledge structural inequality and discrimination. Throughout his work, Kusaka frames elements of exploitative capitalism such as unpaid overtime as Japanese virtues like "hard work."

62. Ibid., 242–43. Here Kusaka ignores innumerable scandals. Abe Shinzō, in his collaborative volume with author Hyakuta Naoki, unfurls the *mizuho no kuni* (land of august rice plants) cliché, argues that the foundation of the Japanese economy historically has been cooperation and mutual aid, and asserts that Japan must leverage this legacy while working to increase "productivity"—a neoliberal buzzword associated with the conservative agenda of eroding labor protections and encouraging the rise of precarious, temporary employment to drive profits. He also argues for the necessity of cuts to welfare and healthcare spending. See Abe Shinzō and Hyakuta Naoki, *Nihon yo, Sekai no Mannaka de saki hokore* (Japan! Be proud of yourself in the "center of the world") (Tokyo: Wac, 2013), 189–90.

63. Watanabe Shōichi, *Nihon kōkokuron* (On Japan) (Tokyo: Chichi Shuppan, 2012), 14.

64. Abe and Hyakuta, *Nihon yo,* 2. Wac, the publisher of this work, is a major producer of rightist works including Nanking denial texts. Hyakuta's novel *Eien no Zero* (The eternal zero) became a best seller and was made into a hit film in 2013. It is an Abe favorite.

65. Ibid., 14.

66. Ibid., 14–15.

67. Sakurai Yoshiko, "*Jokei Tennō yōninan no mujun to kiken*" (The contradictions and dangers of the plan to allow female Imperial succession), in "Sakurai Yoshiko Official Site," December 3, 2012, http://yoshiko-sakurai.jp/2005/12/03/444.

68. Yatagawa Osamu, *Koto danzetsu keikaku* (The plot to end the Imperial line) (Tokyo: Seirindō), 12–14.

69. Ibid., 15.

70. The *Nippon Kaigi* (Japan Conference) is an organization with tens of thousands of members and is the leading contemporary promoter of "respect" for the Imperial family and "2000 years of imperial history," and is one of the primary agents promoting marches and events on National Foundation Day—the February 11 commemoration of the ascension of the mythical Emperor Jimmu. They are also strongly opposed to female Imperial succession. Abe Shinzō has served as the vice-secretary of the Nippon Kaigi's support wing in the Diet. Two-thirds of his 2013 cabinet belonged to the group.

MOTO HAGIO
Translated by Matt Thorn
Introduction by Frenchy Lunning

Nanohana

We were very privileged to be given permission to reprint a short story from Moto Hagio's *Nanohana* (2012)[1] for this *Mechademia* book. Moto Hagio is one of the remarkable group of female mangaka called the *nengumi 24,* who are credited with developing the shōjo genre in all its visual and diverse narrative richness. Moto Hagio, who for the past forty-two years has produced one masterpiece after another, had a hit with her first foray into manga with the series *The Poe Clan* (1972–76), which examined the intricacies of human life as seen through the eyes of a vampire boy and earned her the Shogakukan Manga Award in 1976.[2] She has continued to weave her complex, emotional stories of the human condition—sometimes as science fiction—but always about those characters in states of trauma and/or abuse as social and cultural "outsiders."

But *Nanohana* responds to a different trauma: the environmental disasters in Japan. Moto explains:

> The accident at Chernobyl had been nagging at me for some time. When disaster struck a Japanese nuclear power plant in 2011, I was overcome with despair. But despair does not help us move forward, so I made "Nanohana" as a way of cheering myself up. I want to think together with everyone else about Fukushima and Chernobyl, about the future of the Earth, about the future of humankind, and to keep thinking moving forward.[3]

In this work, Moto Hagio writes about a young girl, Naho, who is evacuated as her home is ravaged by the 2011 Fukushima disaster. But in the midst of her anxiety, she transcends her dire reality to another time and space: the Chernobyl disaster of 1986, where she encounters surprising parallels to her own life. Mary Knighton suggests that these "2011 disasters of first earthquake and tsunami, followed by the reactor meltdowns and weeks of aftershocks, continue today due to the lingering crisis at Fukushima Daiichi. These events, known as 3.11, compounded the precarity in recessionary Japan—literally displacing the *ibasho* (home, and sense of belonging) of hundreds of thousands in Tohoku—and deepened a quotidian experience of malaise at a crisis constantly in the news, with no end in sight."[4]

Drawn with Moto's usual beautiful, delicate, clear line style and sensitivity, Naho's anxiety, which has propelled her into another world or dimension, becomes a meditation on our global environmental crisis and introduces a potential healing solution that, though perhaps naïve, still gestures dream-like toward a return to a respect for the land and a reexamination of our practices as well as a reconciliation in terms of our future behavior.

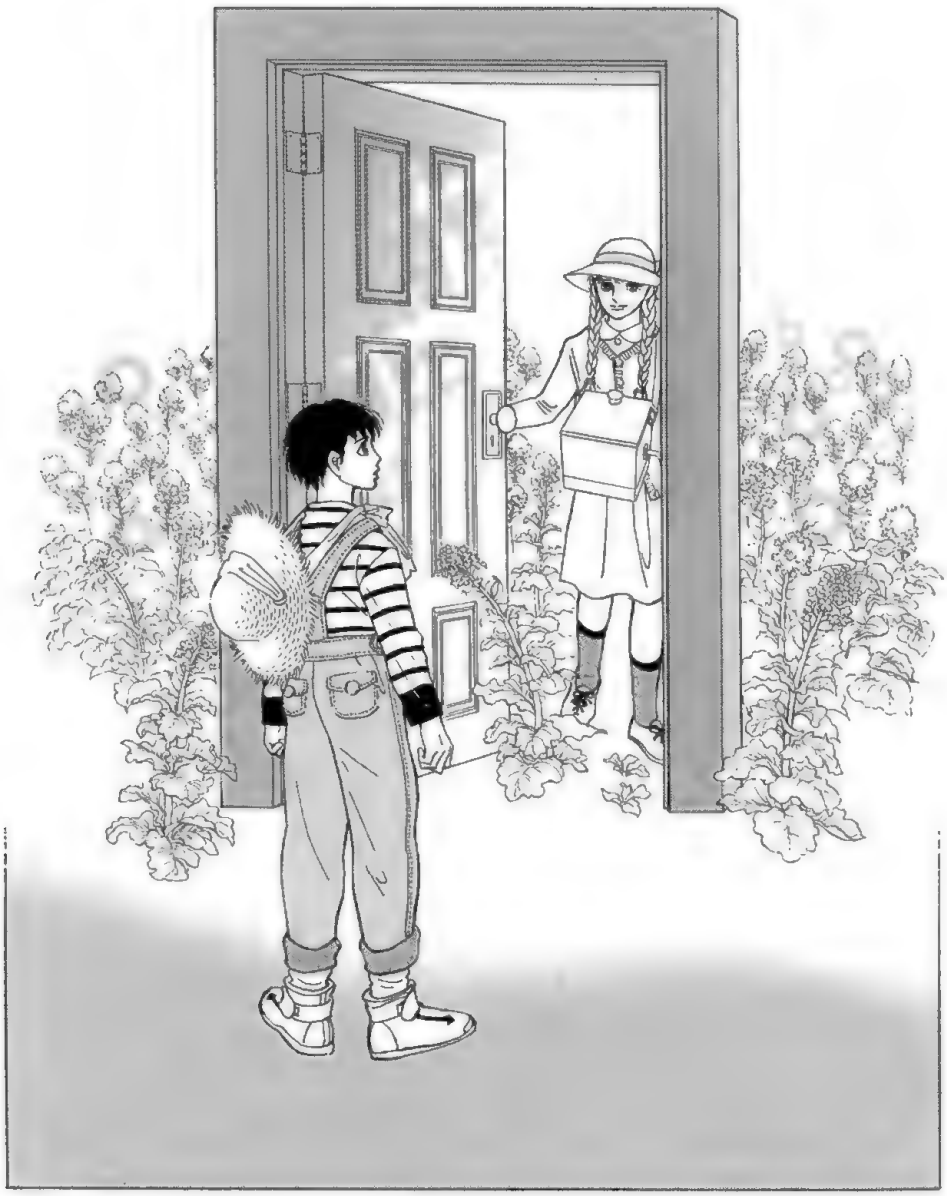
Matt Thorn, long a friend and translator of Moto's work, had to respond to the peculiarities of the original Japanese dialogue as written by Moto, in that "many of the characters in this story speak in a northeastern Japanese dialect; some more thickly than others. In order to convey the sense of the difference between these characters' speech and that of characters speaking "standard" Japanese, [he] chose to translate that speech into Scottish English. This decision was enthusiastically endorsed by Moto Hagio. To ensure authenticity, [he] enlisted the help of [his] generous friend Keaira Finlay, a native speaker of Scottish English."[5]

Further, the difficult work of flipping and fitting our horizontal-based language into the Japanese vertical-based language balloons, requiring an expertise in the comics style of dialogue in both languages, as well as significant graphic design chops, was achieved by designer Rana Raeuchle, a *Mechademia* regular, who always manages these difficulties with great skill and expediency.

Notes

1. Moto Hagio, *Nanohana* (Tokyo: Shogakukan, 2012).
2. Matt Thorn. "Shōjo Manga." *Matt-Thorn.com*. Interview. Also published in *Comics Journal*, no. 269 (July/August 2005).
3. Moto Hagio, quoted from an e-mail to Matt Thorn, July 17, 2014.
4. Mary A. Knighton, "The Sloppy Realities of 3.11 in Shiriagari Kotobuki's Manga しりあがり寿がマンガで描く3.11のぞんざいな現実." *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 11, issue 26, no. 1 (June 30, 2014). http://japanfocus.org/-Mary-Knighton/4140.
5. Matt Thorn, e-mail, September 27, 2014.

Nanohana

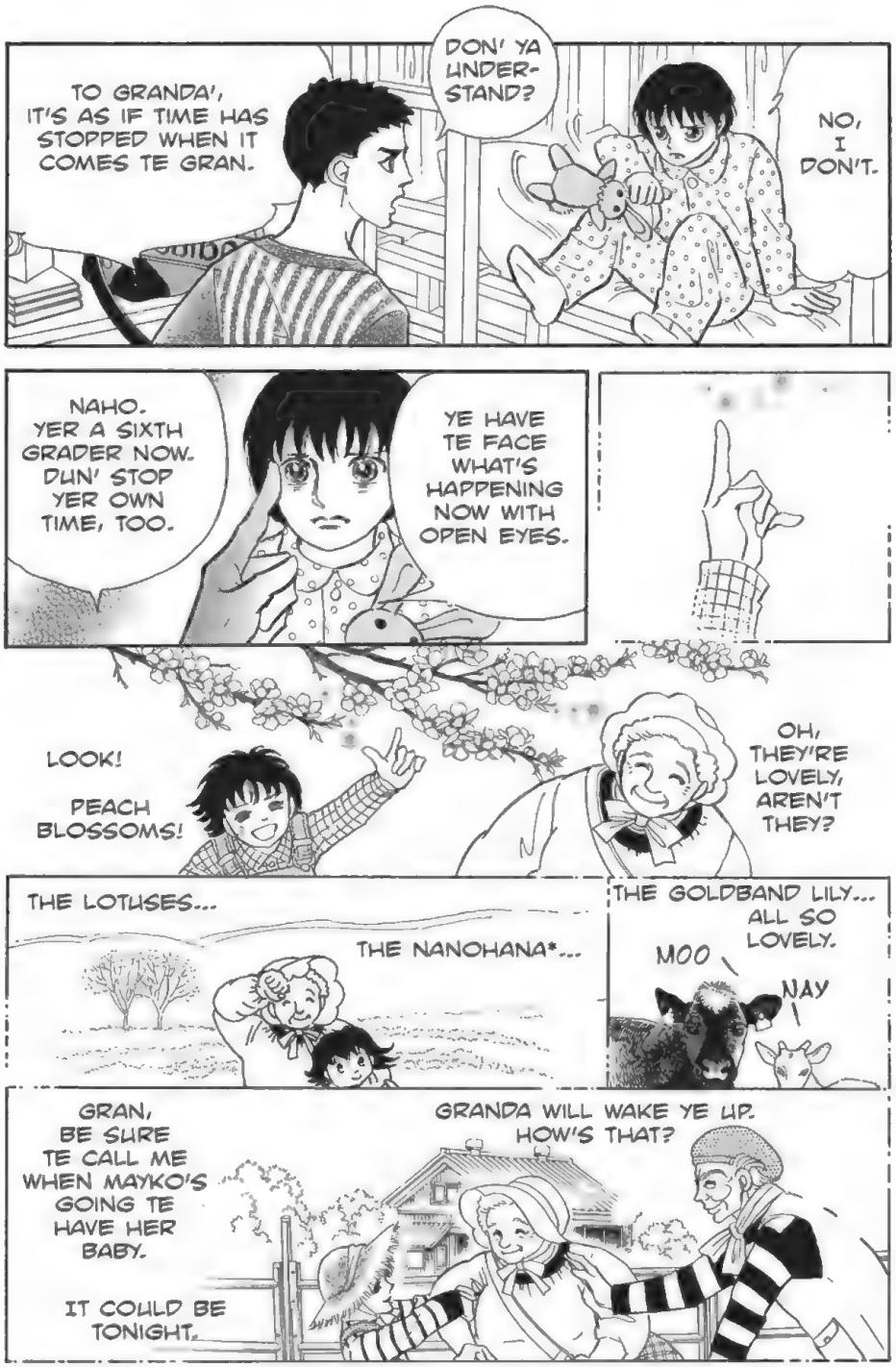


SAY...
WHERE...
... IS GRAN?
THIS IS A MAP OF THE LANDS THAT...
...WERE CONTAMINATED BY THE CHERNOBYL DISASTER.
MS. SA-SAKI?
CAN PEOPLE LIVE THERE?
THERE'S AN "EXCLUSION ZONE"...
...BUT PEOPLE STILL LIVE IN CONTAMINATED AREAS.
MS. SA-SAKI?
IS THAT WHAT'S GOING TE HAPPEN IN FUKUSHIMA, TOO?
FUKUSHIMA IS'NA CHER-NOBYL.
ONE WAY TE HELP PREVENT ANOTHER ACCIDENT LIKE THIS...
IS FER ALL OF US
TE STUDY AND LEARN.

NO ACTIVITIES ARE ALLOWED ON SCHOOL GROUNDS THIS AFTERNOON.
BYE-BYE!
BYE-BYE!
WHAT'S THE RADIATION LEVEL?
TWO MIC-RO.
WSSSH
WSSSH
WSSSHH
GRAN DISAPPEARED.
I'M HOME!
HEY! NAHO!
GAKU.
PAT YERSELF DOWN!
AND DON' TAKE OFF YER MASK TILL YE DO!
*BACKPACK READS "SAFETY"

GAKU'S BOTHERING ME
WELCOME HOME.
RADIATION'S INVISIBLE, YA KNOW.
GAKU.
NAHO.
IS THERE ANYTHING YE WANT US TE GRAB FROM THE OLD HOUSE?
GRAN...
WHAP!
NAHO!
THIS ALBUM BRINGS BACK MEMORIES.
I WANT TE RAISE COWS AGAIN.
THE CHERRIES SHOULD BE RIPE! LET'S PICK 'EM AND EAT 'EM!
WE CAN'T DO THAT! THEY'RE CONTAMINATED.
SO WE'LL WASH 'EM!
ARE YE DAFT? THE SOIL'S CONTAMINATED. THEY'RE NO' SAFE!
THE POT AND TUB GRAN USES TE MAKE CHEESE.
ARE THEY NO' A BIT BIG?
HOW ABOUT HER KIMONO?

THE ONE SHE WORE FOR YER FIRST VISIT TE THE SHRINE.
OH, MY. IT'S BEEN MORE THAN TEN YEARS.
IS IT ANOTHER SHORT VISIT??
NEXT MONTH. N'MORE THAN TWO HOURS.
YER GRAN'LL BE HAPPY TE FIND HER KIMONO WHEN SHE GET'S HOME!
WHEN IS GRAN COMMIN' HOME?
NAHO.
REAL SOON.
DINNE WORRY, GERL.
GAKU.
HEY!
STOP TALKING ABOUT GRAN!
BUT THERE HASN'T EVEN BEEN A FUNERAL! SHE MIGHT REALLY COME HOME!
EVERYTHING NEAR THE BEACH WAS WIPED OUT BY THE TSUNAMI. SWEPT AWAY.
GRAN WAS DOWN BY THE SEA THAT DAY.
IT WAS LOUSY LUCK.
...


TO GRANDA', IT'S AS IF TIME HAS STOPPED WHEN IT COMES TE GRAN.
DON' YA UNDER-STAND?
NO, I DON'T.
NAHO. YER A SIXTH GRADER NOW. DUN' STOP YER OWN TIME, TOO.
YE HAVE TE FACE WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW WITH OPEN EYES.
LOOK! PEACH BLOSSOMS!
OH, THEY'RE LOVELY, AREN'T THEY?
THE LOTUSES...
THE NANOHANA*...
THE GOLDBAND LILY... ALL SO LOVELY.
MOO
NAY
GRAN, BE SURE TE CALL ME WHEN MAYKO'S GOING TE HAVE HER BABY.
IT COULD BE TONIGHT.
GRANDA WILL WAKE YE UP. HOW'S THAT?

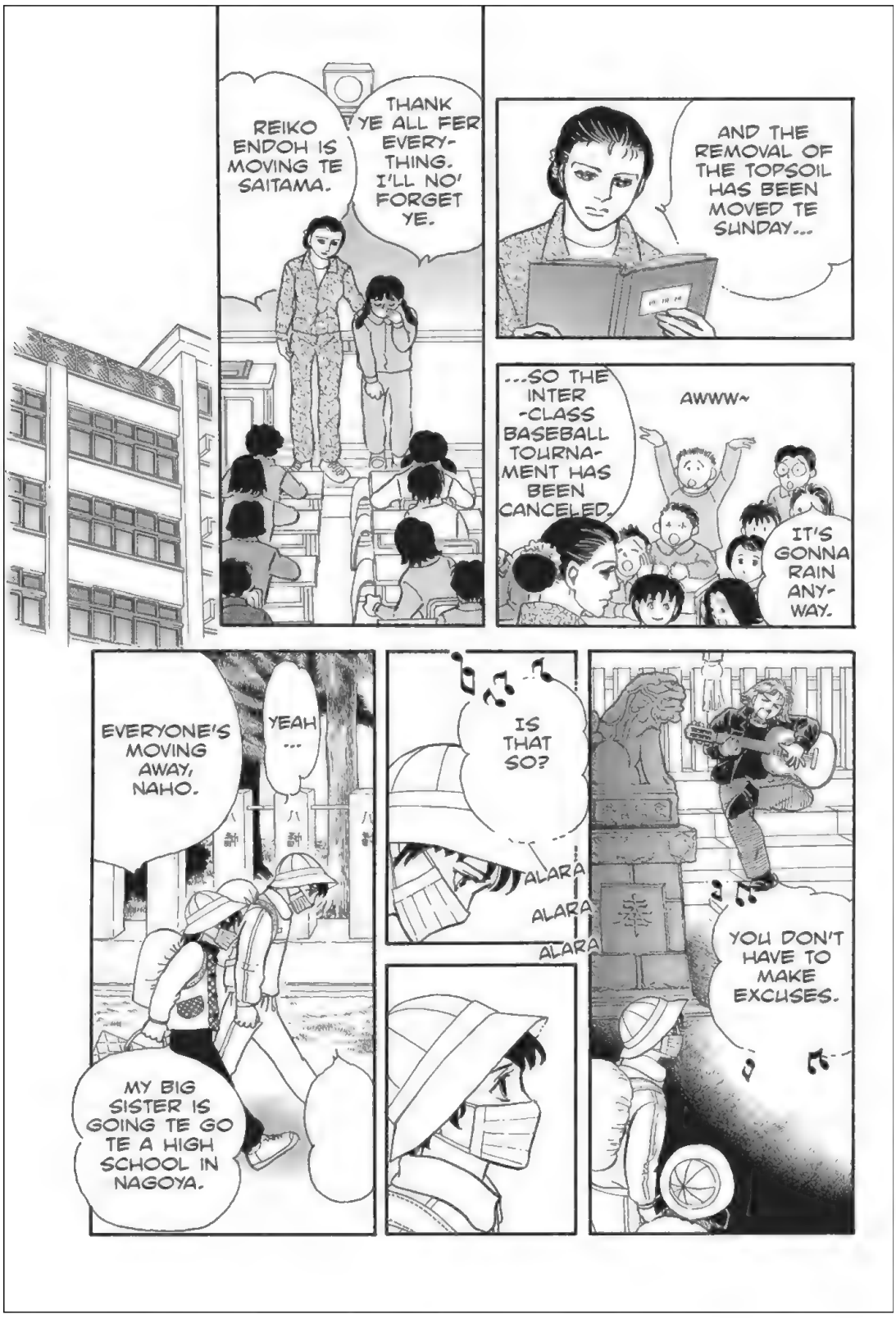
NANOHANA: BRASSICA RAPA; FIELD MUSTARD; ALSO KNOWN AS RAPE.

GAKU, YE GO TE ONE OF THEM FANCY TOKYO UNIVERSITIES.
NAHO, YE FIND A MAN TE MARRY INTO THE FAMILY, LIKE YER FATHER DID.
NAHO'S A BONNIE ONE. AYE, SHE'LL HAVE PLENTY O' SUITORS.
GRAN! GRAN!
THE PLUMS HAVE TURNED GREEN!
NO ONE CAN LIVE...
...ON THE LANDS POLLUTED BY CHERNOBYL.*

FOOTNOTE: BY THIS THE ARTIST MEANS "AREAS SUBJECTED TO HIGH LEVELS OF RADIATION." PLEASE VIEW THIS EXPRESSION AS A REFRAIN WITHIN A SOMEWHAT ABSTRACT IMAGE.

WHAT IS THIS!?
WHERE AM I!?
NO!
I'M SCARED!
I'M SCARED!!
!
WHO ARE YOU!?
GRAN!!

GRAN! GRAN! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE!?
NAHO?
I'M PICKING PLUMS.
MAYKO HAS'NE HAD HER WEE BAIRN YET.
GRAN! THIS ISN'T THE VILLAGE!
THIS ISN'T THE VILLAGE!
IT'S CHERNOBYL!
WE HAVE TE GO HOME, GRAN!
GRAN!
LET'S GO HOME!


REIKO ENDOH IS MOVING TE SAITAMA.
THANK YE ALL FER EVERY-THING. I'LL NO' FORGET YE.
AND THE REMOVAL OF THE TOPSOIL HAS BEEN MOVED TE SUNDAY...
...SO THE INTER-CLASS BASEBALL TOURNA-MENT HAS BEEN CANCELED.
AWWW~
IT'S GONNA RAIN ANY-WAY.
EVERYONE'S MOVING AWAY, NAHO.
YEAH ...
MY BIG SISTER IS GOING TE GO TE A HIGH SCHOOL IN NAGOYA.
IS THAT SO?
ALARA
ALARA
ALARA
YOU DON'T HAVE TO MAKE EXCUSES.

WOW! HE HAS YELLOW HAIR! HE'S A FOREIGN-ER!
HUH?
NAHO!?
EH!?
YOU'RE NAHO ABE, AREN'T YOU? IT'S ME! ISHIDA!
ONJU!? YOU'RE ONJU!?
IT'S BEEN THREE YEARS! I HEARD THERE WAS A FESTIVAL, SO I CAME HOME.
HOW IS EVERY-ONE?
STRUM STRUM
WHAT? THERE'S GONNA BE A FESTI-VAL!?
YOU DON'T HAVE TO GET DOWN ON YOUR KNEES.*
ALARA ALARA ALARA
A FESTIVAL IS A WASTE OF TIME.
NAHO.
EVERYONE'S SCATTERED.
THE PLUM VILLAGE WILL NEVER COME BACK AGAIN.

"GET DOWN ON YOUR KNEES" IS A REFERENCE TO AN "APOLOGY TOUR" BY TEPCO UTILITY OFFICIALS FOLLOWING THE FUKUSHIMA NUCLEAR DISASTER IN WHICH TOP EXECU-TIVES REPEATEDLY GOT DOWN ON THEIR HANDS AND KNEES TO APOLOGIZE TO VICTIMS IN ONE OF THE MOST EXTREME FASHIONS PRESCRIBED BY JAPANESE TRADITION.

IT CAN COME BACK.
SOMEDAY, WHEN THAT THING IS STABILIZED AND THE SOIL IS CLEAN AGAIN.
WHEN WILL IT BECOME CLEAN?
WE CAN'T RAISE COWS ANY-MORE.
ALARA ALARA ALARA
PAT PAT
I'LL BE SINGING AT THE MEET-ING PLACE. COME AND LISTEN!
IF YE GO TE TOKYO, IT TURNS YER HAIR YELLOW.
NAHO!
GRANDA'S BEEN THINKING!
HOW ABOUT GRAN'S SEED SOWER!
HUH?
YE KEN, TE GRAB ON OUR NEXT VISIT.
WE'LL BRING IT HOME. KLACKITY KLACKITY KLACK!
THE ONE WITH THE HAND CRANK.
NAHO USED TE LOVE TE PLAY WITH THAT.
THAT THING?

I DON'T NEED THAT OLD THING.
WHY? YOU USED TE LOVE THAT THING!
WE'LL PLANT COSMOS FLOWER SEEDS ALONG THE RIVER BANK!
AND WHEN GRAN COMES HOME--
SHE IS NE COMMIN' HOME!
NAHO!
NEITHER ARE THE COWS OR THE GOATS! THEY'RE GONE!
NAHO!
WAAH!
NOTHING WILL EVER BE THE SAME AGAIN!
AUCH, CALM DOWN YOU'S.
AHH AHH AHH
I'M SORRY, GRANDA...
.....

PIT PAT
PIT PAT
SNFF
SNFF
OH, NO...
I'M BACK IN THE SCARY FOREST.
WAS IT YOU!?
DID YOU TAKE GRAN AWAY!?
GET THAT DOLL AWAY FROM ME!
I'M SCAR-ED!
HELP ME!

STAY IN BED NOW, NAHO.
BUT...
I DON'T WANT TE SLEEP.
I HAVE SCARY DREAMS...
GOOD AFTER-NOON.
THANK YE FOR COMING ALL THIS WAY. PLEASE, COME IN.
NOT AT ALL, NOT AT ALL.
NAHO
THIS IS GRAN'S FRIEND, MRS. FUJIKAWA.
SHE'S A NURSE, YE KEN.
NAHO! OH, I HEARD SO MUCH ABOUT YOU FROM SUMIYO. SO YOU'RE NAHO!
I HEAR YOU LOVE COWS AND GOATS.

SUMIYO, YOUR GRAN, WAS SUCH A KIND SOUL.
WHEN I TOLD HER I WAS GOING TO A HOSPITAL IN UKRAINE - IN THE OLD SOVIET UNION - TO TREAT THE CHILDREN THERE, SHE GAVE ME ALL THESE HAND-MADE DOLLS.
FOR THE CHILDREN
UKRAINE?
YE MEAN... CHERNOBYL?
THAT'S RIGHT. THE ACCIDENT WAS IN 1986. I WAS AT A HOSPITAL IN KIEV IN '94, AND THEN IN BELARUS IN '95.
EIGHTEEN YEARS AGO.
I TOOK THESE PHOTOS THEN, WITH THE CHILDREN.
SEE? THESE ARE THE DOLLS.
I USED TE HAVE ONE.
YEARS AGO...
THE CHILDREN GAVE ME LETTERS THANKING HER.
WHEN I GAVE THEM TO SUMIYO, SHE CRIED.
"THE POOR BAIRNS," SHE SAID.
18 YEARS AGO...

I DIDN'T KNOW. I WAS IN UNIVERSITY IN SENDAI IN '94.
YES, SUMIYO TOLD ME HER DAUGHTER TOMIKO CAME BACK FROM SENDAI WITH A MAN.
SHE WAS SO HAPPY.
CHER-NOBYL WAS SUCH A DISAS-TER...
WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT THAT FUKU-SHIMA...
WH-- WHAT HAPPENED TE THESE CHILDREN?
WERE THEY CURED?
DID THEY GROW UP?
SOME DID; SOME DIDN'T...
BUT-
-THE RADIATION LEVELS HAVE DROPPED A LOT, HAVEN'T THEY? IT'S BEEN 26 YEARS.
THERE ARE A LOT OF PEOPLE LIV-ING IN SOME OF THE CON-TAMINATED AREAS.
AND THEY GROW PLANTS TO REMOVE THE RADIATION FROM THE GROUND.
SUN-FLOW-ERS. FIELD MUSTARD. RYE.
AND THAT CLEANS THE SOIL?
IT TAKES YEARS AND YEARS.
FIELD MUS-TARD. NANO-HANA.

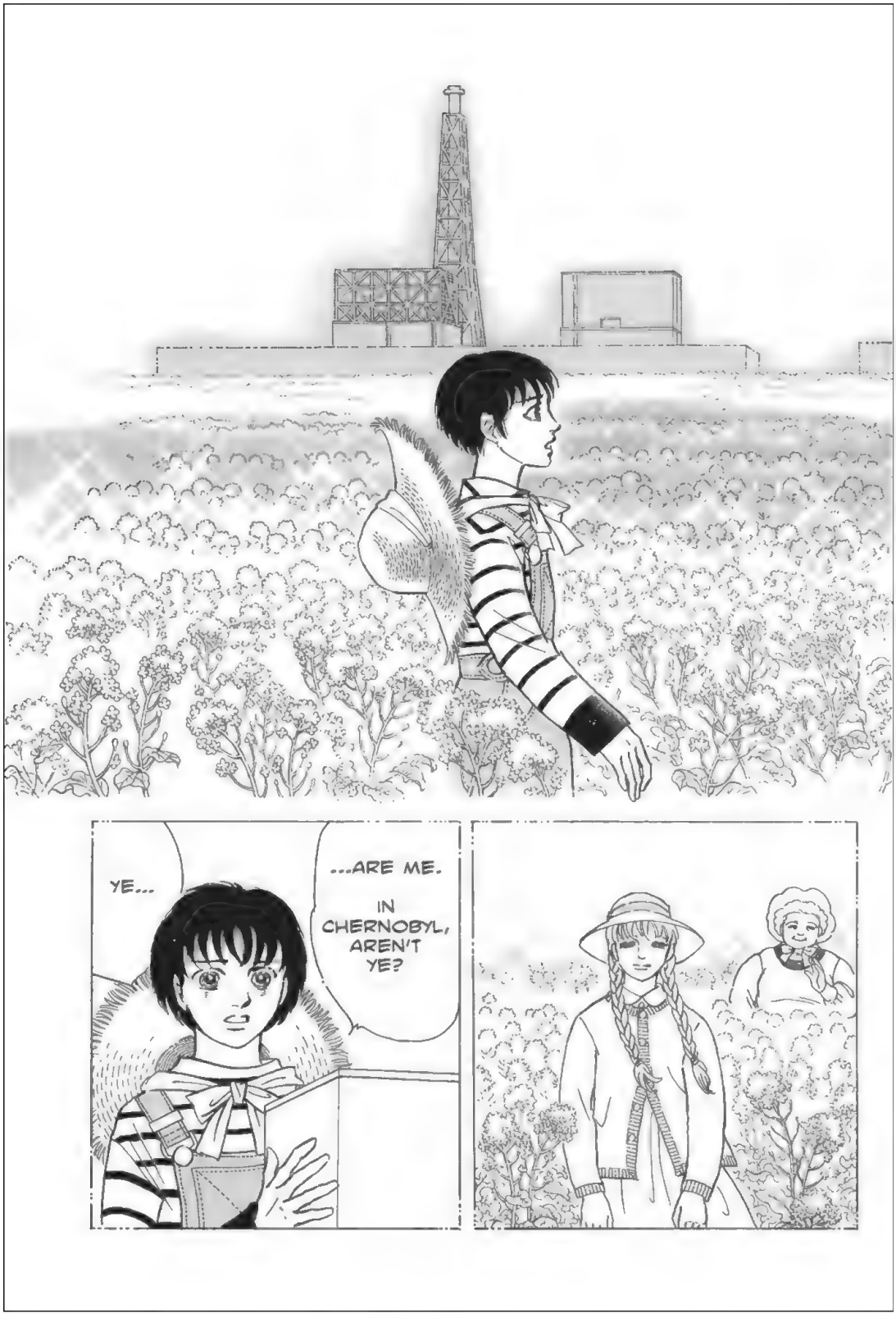
AFTER MRS. FUJIKAWA, THE NURSE, LEFT, MOMMY CRIED.
MOMMY'S SAD, TOO.
SHE WAS HIDING IT.
ALARA ALARA ALARA
HEY! ON THE TELLY!
TURN UP THE VOLUME!
ISN'T THAT THE ISHIDA BOY?
THAT'S THE YOUNGEST OF THE ISHIDA BROTHERS, ONJU.
YOU DON'T DON'T HAVE TO GET DOWN ON YOUR KNEES. ALARA ALARA
WHAT'S "AH LA LA"?
I WANT OUR FRIDGE BACK.
WASN'T HE MAKING COMMERCIALS IN TOKYO?
IT'S THE "ALARA PRINCIPLE."
"AS LOW AS REASONABLY ACHIEVABLE."*

* A CONCEPT USED BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE ON RADIATION PROTECTION (ICRP) IN ASSESSING RISKS AND LEVELS OF EXPOSURE TO RADIATION. THE PHRASING USED IN THE ICRP'S 1950 RECOMMENDATIONS WAS "TO THE LOWEST POSSIBLE LEVEL."

I WANT OUR KITCHEN BACK.
I WANT OUR FUTON BACK.
I WANT OUR SAFE WATER BACK.
FESTI-VAL?
LOOKIT THA' YELLOW HAIR!
LOOKIN' LIKE SOME KIN' OF HOO-LIGAN!
HE SAID HE'LL BE SINGING AT THE FESTIVAL.
I WANT OUR COWS BACK.
THE VIL-LAGERS ARE SCAT-TERED ALL OWER!
WHERE ARE THEY GOING TE HAVE A FESTIVAL?
I WANT THE CABBAGES IN OUR FIELDS BACK.
I WANT OUR LITTLE VILLAGE ROADS BACK
ALARA
ALARA
ALARA
.....
GRAN-DA...

DC
DC
.....
I SAW YE IN A PHOTO-GRAPH.
YE WERE HOLD-ING A DOLL.
HEY ...
ISN'T THAT
GRAN'S SEED SOWER?

KLACKITY
KLACKITY
KLACKITY
KLACKITY
PITTER
PATTER


YE...
...ARE ME.
IN CHERNOBYL, AREN'T YE?

AND I...
...AM YE IN FUKU-SHIMA.

HUH!? YE REALLY BROUGHT THAT THING HOME?
IT WAS IN TH' BARN. DINNA FUSS YERSELF. AH WASHED IT.
GRAN'S SEED SOWER.
BUT WE DON'T HAVE ANY FIELDS.
I'LL USE IT.
NAHO.
WHEN WE MOVE BACK, WE'LL RAISE COWS
AND GOATS. AND MAKE CHEESE.
AND I'LL PLANT LOTS OF NANOHANA
RIGHT?
GRANDA?
Nanohana end.

Worlds of As If

SATOMI SAITO

Beyond the Horizon of the Possible Worlds: A Historical Overview of Japanese Media Franchises

The world's first virtual-reality, massively multiplayer, online role-playing game starts. The man-machine interface helmet called the Nerve Gear transports the players' minds into the virtual game world where the players can experience the simulated reality with their avatars. On the first day of the service, the players discover that they are trapped in the game world. The logout option is disabled, and the avatars they created for the game world are initialized to reflect their appearances in the real world. To the players who panic at seeing their real bodies in the virtual world, the game creator Kayaba Akihiko declares that the only possible way out from the game world is to defeat the last boss on the one hundredth floor, that is, to clear the game. "This is no longer a game," Kayaba adds. When their life bars reach zero in the game world, their bodies in the real world will also die. Ten thousand players are now fated to fight monsters or even their fellow players in order to escape from the virtual game world.

This is the opening of the successful novel series *Sword Art Online* by Kawahara Reki (Figure 1), which was serialized online on the author's homepage from November 2002 to July 2008. Once it was republished in paperback by Dengeki Bunko in 2009, the series quickly gained popularity in the mainstream media

THEIR AWARENESS OF BELONGING TO MULTIPLE WORLDS—BUT NOT BELONGING TO ANY ONE WORLD—EXEMPLIFIES RECENT TRENDS IN IMAGINARY-WORLD MAKING AND ECHOES THE BUSINESS OF CROSS-MEDIA FRANCHISE, WHERE MEDIA PRODUCERS EXPLOIT CHARACTERS BY TRANSMIGRATING THEM INTO MULTIPLE MEDIA PLATFORMS.

and was named number one in the top ten novels chosen by an annual guidebook of light novels *Kono raito noberu ga sugoi!* (2004– , This light novel is outstanding!) in 2011 and again in 2012. The novel was soon made into a successful television animated series in 2012, followed by manga adaptations by various artists. *Sword Art Online* became one of the pioneering works of successfully commercialized online novels and triggered a publication boom of online novels, as exemplified by numerous titles that came out soon after, such as Touno Mamare's *Maoyū Maō Yūsha* (online 2009; in print 2010–12, Maoyu: archenemy and hero) and *Rogu Horaizun* (online 2010– ; in print 2011– , Log horizon) or Sato Tsutomu's *Mahōka Kōkō no Rettōsei* (online 2008–11; in print 2011– , The irregular at magic high school).

In terms of its story setup, *Sword Art Online* is a variation of a popular genre: the battle royale in a sealed environment pioneered by Takami Koshun's *Battle Royale* (1999, *Batoru Rowaiaru*). It is also not difficult to see in *Sword Art Online* a common utopian fantasy in young adult fiction, where a boy with average physical abilities becomes an invincible sword fighter in the virtual game world. At the same time, however, *Sword Art Online* is a twisted relationship between the real world and the virtual world—an imaginary world that irreducibly traps—literary and figuratively—their bodies and minds. Their awareness of belonging to multiple worlds—but not belonging to any one world—exemplifies recent trends in imaginary-world making and echoes the business of cross-media franchise, where media producers exploit characters by transmigrating them into multiple media platforms.

When such cross-media development of a story world becomes the norm in media industry, story becomes self-conscious about its own world making and expansion. Here we see the increased significance of the role of narrative as a binding agent of diversifying story characters and expanding story worlds. The *Sword Art Online* series is based on novels rather than a more multimedia-friendly format of animation or games, which testifies a curious return in content-delivery media from audio-visual media to older text media. This article aims to examine current trends of imaginary-world making and its relationship to the creation of novel-based characters and stories—in the predigital era, such as *Vampire Hunter D* (1983, *Kyūketsuki hantā D*), and in a recent example of the transmedia franchise, *The Melancholy of Haruhi*

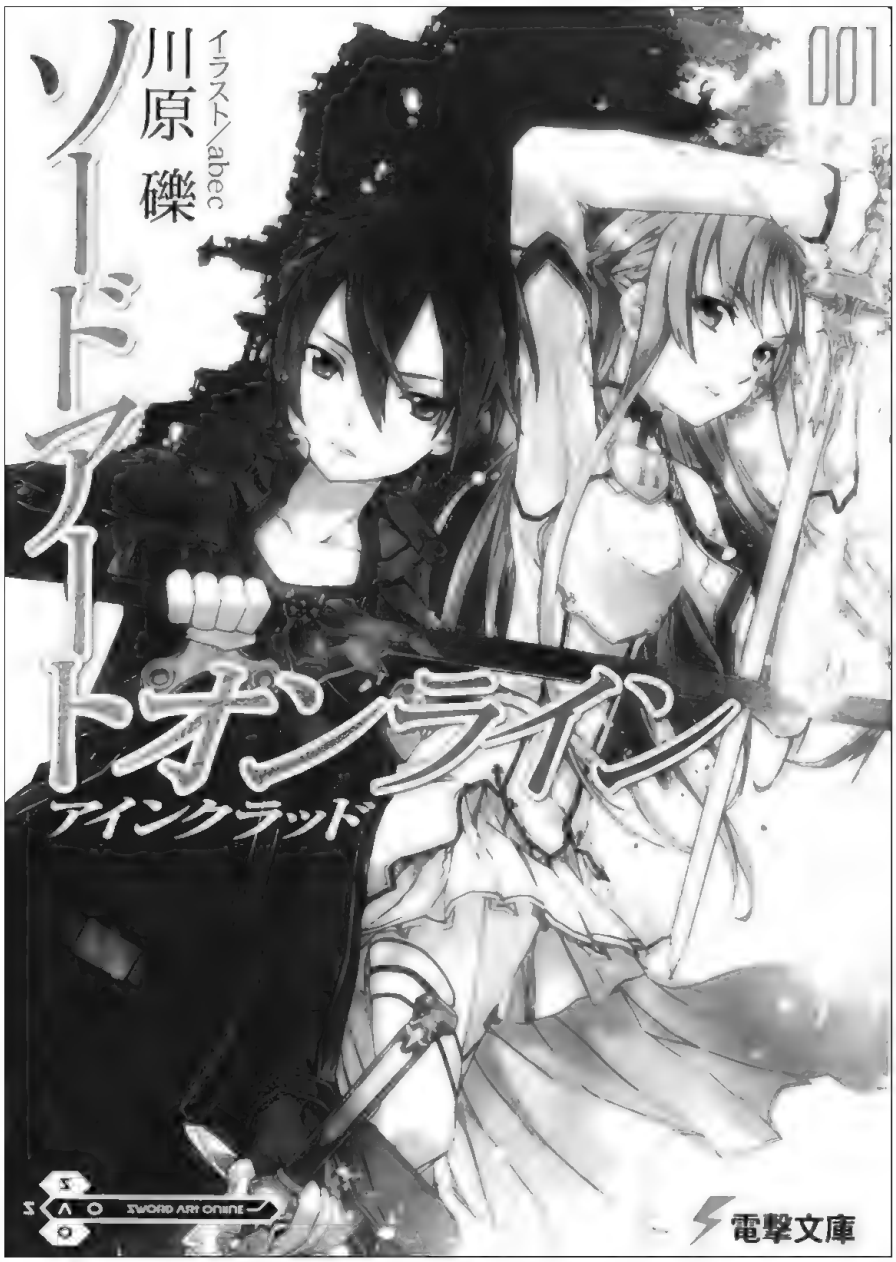


FIGURE 1. The cover of *Sword Art Online* light novel, volume 1 (Tokyo: Asukī Mediawākusu, 2009), artwork by abec. Its anime adaptations (first season from July 7 to December 22, 2012; second season from July 5 to December 20, 2014) are based on abec's character design for the light novel series.

Suzumiya (2003, *Suzumiya Haruhi no yūutsu*). The comparison of these novel-based franchise models will show us the importance of text-based media in the age of digital media consumption that prepared the rise of Web serials as represented by *Sword Art Online*.

The *Vampire Hunter D* series represents Japan's early stage of multimedia franchise business where media adaptation prevails. The franchise originates from the novel of the same title written by Kikuchi Hideyuki and published by Asahi Sonorama in 1983 (Figure 2). Kikuchi is a prolific writer and one of the pioneers of apocalyptic Gothic fantasy, a subgenre quite popular in the 1980s. Following his debut work, *Makai Toshi Shinjuku* (1982, *Demon City Shinjuku*), set in a postapocalyptic Tokyo, Kikuchi's second novel the *Vampire Hunter D* recounts a story of a bounty hunter "D" in the distant future where Hollywood Western gunslingers and Hammer Film monsters coexist. The nuclear winter has pushed humans into underground shelters and the contaminated earth has become a place for historically marginalized creatures: vampires and werewolves, for whom humans are merely food. The protagonist D is the cursed child of a human and a vampire called a "dhampir." With the vampires' supernatural power and the human ability to walk in daylight, D hunts harmful monsters, including vampires, to save human beings. The saga portrays D's journey in the postapocalyptic world and his interactions with both the human race and the disappearing race of vampires; the stories eventually reveal the secret of his birth as well as the vampire king's vision of the new world where humans and vampire can coexist peacefully.

Several unique factors in Japan's rising media industry contributed to the success of *Vampire Hunter D*. First is the business model of the publishing house, Asahi Sonorama, and their creation in 1975 of the book series, Asahi Sonorama Bunko, dedicated to fantasy, horror, and science fiction. Asahi Sonorama itself was a division of The Asahi Shimbun Company and was started as a distributor of "sonosheets," thin vinyl phonograph records that became the first affordable, portable, and disposable audio medium in Japan during the 1960s. With this new media format, Asahi Sonorama soon became competitive in children's entertainment of animation, manga, and *tokusatsu* (live-action TV programs with special effects). The company pioneered the early multimedia business by incorporating sonosheets into their publications. The book series Sonorama Bunko inherited the multimedia business of the company and actively incorporated images into their paperbacks by adding illustrations by famous animators and manga artists.[1] In particular, the success of their novelizations of the popular TV animation series such as *Space Battleship Yamato* (1974–75, *Uchū Senkan Yamato*) and *Mobile Suit Gundam* (1979–80,

FIGURE 2. The cover of *Vampire Hunter D* light novel (1983, *Asahi Sonorama*), artwork by Amano Yoshitaka, who is also known for his conceptual art design for the popular video game franchise *Final Fantasy* (Tokyo: Square Co., Ltd, 1987–).

Kidō Senshi Gandamu) convinced them to publish more novels that shared a similar worldview with those animation programs. Although other publishing houses Hayakawa Shobo and Tokyo Sogensha had already established a book series dedicated to science fiction and fantasy, their collection was dedicated to translated science fiction for adult readers.[2] Asahi Sonorama opened a niche market by publishing novels by Japanese authors that aligned with animation series with light sci-fi settings. Undoubtedly, the initial publication of *Vampire Hunter D*, a vampire novel by a young, unknown author, was significantly helped by the sophisticated illustrations of the designer Amano Yoshitaka. Amano worked as an art designer for the animation studio Tatsunoko Production and was already known in science fiction fandom for his Gothic illustrations modeled after sword and sorcery.[3] *Vampire Hunter D*, then, was produced as a transgenre and transmedia work crisscrossing animation, science fiction fandom, and Western genre conventions.

Despite its longevity as a novel series, the way the *Vampire Hunter D* saga traverses multiple media platforms appears to be rather conventional. In the course of thirty years, the series has produced anime, manga, and game adaptations, but compared to the success of the original novel that became one of the longest running series with more than thirty subsequent volumes from Sonorama Bunko, its multimedia expansion is quite limited. The initial anime adaptation of the first novel was released in 1985 as a sell-only video (OVA) followed by an audio drama on cassette tapes. Its multimedia development started rather late in 1999, when it was released as a video game and an animated feature film in the following year (*Vampire Hunter D: Blood Lust*) by Urban Vision Entertainment, a U.S.-based distributor.

There are several factors that prevent Kikuchi's creation from migrating to other media. Kikuchi's detailed imagination of the postapocalyptic world certainly helped its adaptations to be appreciated by already committed fans of his novels. Quite naturally, its anime, manga, and game adaptations heavily depended on the original story and characters and did not necessarily help expand its story world across multiple media platforms. Despite the recent transmedia efforts after the movie adaptation, the multiple versions of *Vampire Hunter D* are considered subordinate to the original novels. Consequently, media adaptations of the novel hardly add new material to the original story and offer mere repetitions of the original saga. In other words, despite its media-crossing, genre-mix tendency of the original novels, the world of the *D* franchise is strongly regulated by the author's unique appropriation of multiple genre conventions, which makes it difficult to reappropriate and expand the story world. The graphic originality of the series' illustrations by Amano

further hindered later media adaptations, since poor adaptations would only disillusion dedicated fans of the original series' look. The first OVA in 1985 was an attempt to visualize the first novel faithfully but failed to make profits or attract fans. This adaptation by director Ashida Toyoo simply could not replicate Amano's detailed illustrations in the original novel.

This dead end of the Japanese media crossing was broken by American fans of Japanese animation. Whereas the video release was only seen as a detraction of the *D* series in Japan, where a novel is often the authentic entry point into the story world, Americans who lacked linguistic access to the original novels favorably received the animation as their only entry point to the franchise. As a result, the *D* franchise proceeded with the 2000 film version directed by Kawajiri Yoshiaki targeting the U.S. audience, because Kawajiri was already known among American anime fans for his cult classics *Wicked City* (1987, *Yojū toshi*), which is based on Kikuchi's novel of the same title in 1985. *Vampire Hunter D: Bloodlust* was first released in the United States in 2000 and then in Japan in original English with Japanese subtitles the following year. American fascination with the Japanese vampire hero even helped the publication of its manga adaptation more than twenty years after the publication of the original novel. The revisionist take on vampire stories in U.S. popular media such as *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1992) and *Interview with the Vampire* (1994) also helped the favorable reception of this Japanese rendition of the European legend, along with Oshii Mamoru's vampire animation *Blood the Last Vampire* (2000). The franchise's popularity in visual media convinced Dark Horse Books to publish all the available novels of the *D* franchise in translation.[4]

The *Vampire Hunter D* series embodies a historical development of the media-mix business as well as its limitations in the changing landscape of media consumption. In his influential study of Japan's media industry, Ōtsuka Eiji argues that a qualitative shift in consumer interest occurred in the late 1980s.[5] According to Ōtsuka, many viewers in this period turned from prepackaged stories of weekly TV broadcasts to the consumption of the greater world (*sekai* or *sekaikan*) that contains these stories. The passive reception of individual stories gradually gave way to the active consumption and appropriation of *sekai*—the grand narrative that was assumed but only accessible at the time to media creators. With the increasing circulation of informational media targeting small niches, consumers were no longer content with the fragments distributed in small portions cut off from the larger story world and controlled by media producers. Instead, they were eager to explore the worldviews (*sekaikan*) and setup (*settei*) for the sake of creating their own versions of stories and characters from the world provided.[6]

A tabletop role-playing game is a useful allegory of this new media strategy, as discussed by Ōtsuka. Compared to computer RPGs that afford a limited number of story lines predetermined by media producers, tabletop RPGs allow players to create their own stories through participation and interaction with other players. Facilitated by a capable game master, players can experience a myriad of possible stories within the world. In the 1980s conceptual shift, the role of media producers became closer to this game master who provides a game world and mediates players' interactions. The game would be a success for producers as long as players adhere to the rule of the game world, that is, as far as fans' participation and reproduction contribute to the profits of the media commodities branded under their company. The rising fan activities in the 1980s marked the gradual rise of the consumers who create consumable stories by their own hands based on the world and characters provided by media producers. The deadlock experienced with the transmedia productions of *Vampire Hunter D* might be due to the "game master's" control that set strict limits on the game's openness to consumer participation.

This 1980s paradigm shift further represents the difference between the blockbuster business model and the media-mix strategy. Marc Steinberg argues that, in Japan's animation industry, consumers are motivated by "a desire not for the character or narrative alone but for the prosumer's participation in the character's world."[7] Following Ōtsuka, Steinberg maintains that "the anime media mix creates not only the character merchandise as material object but also the world to which the character belongs."[8] Ian Condry presents a similar argument but with a more anthropological approach toward the consumers and states that Japan's media industry produces "not so much TV series and films but, more important, fictional characters and dramatic premises that can be parlayed across diverse media."[9] He concludes that what helped the global success of Japanese animation is "the flexibility in adapting characters and worlds across a wide range of media."[10]

Whereas the arguments by Steinberg and Condry are certainly true, their discussions generally are deficient in notions of historical changes and media differences. For instance, the primacy of the character and the world applies to the majority of Japanese media franchises from the manga-based *Astro Boy* in the 1960s, the stationery-based *Hello Kitty* in the 1970s, the novel-based *Vampire Hunter D* in the 1980s, the anime-based *Neon Genesis Evangelion* in the 1990s, and the game-based *THE iDOLM@STER* in the 2000s. In the age of media convergence, it may not be important to contextualize the medium from which the characters and the world are originally sprung. Yet, it is still significant to see the historical contexts of the shift in the relationship

between character and media and the way the world is imagined to support the franchise. Generalizations of the primacy of characters in Japanese entertainment may also overlook the fact that many classic American franchises ranging from Marvel to Disney are also heavily centered on characters. What I would like to focus on here is the recent revival of the novel as a major supplier of the world and characters, in comparison to the failures of *Vampire Hunter D*'s transmedia efforts in Japan. This will explain why many media franchises today still rely on narrative and ultimately how narrative presentations of the world have changed from the 1980s shift as theorized by Ōtsuka.

IN THE 1980s CONCEPTUAL SHIFT, THE ROLE OF MEDIA PRODUCERS BECAME CLOSER TO THIS GAME MASTER WHO PROVIDES A GAME WORLD AND MEDIATES PLAYERS' INTERACTIONS.

The obstacle the *Vampire Hunter D* franchise encountered was the game master's strong control (whether intentional or not) on media consumption, and its transmedia success needed a breakthrough across the national border driven by the global popularity of anime and vampires. This phenomenon has much in common with the global success of *The Matrix* (1999). Media scholar Henry Jenkins discusses the *Matrix* franchise and gives a comprehensive overview of recent multimedia business, articulating various media strategies for the age of media convergence. According to Jenkins, when the transportability of media contents becomes the primary goal of media producers, it becomes the pressing task for producers to control user-generated content and bring the agency of the media dispersion back to the hands of the producers.[11] Against this model, Jenkins proposes a new marketing strategy that he calls "transmedia storytelling." Using the *Matrix* franchise as a model case, Jenkins points out two important characteristics of the transmedia storytelling. First, transmedia storytelling does not simply repeat the original but rather expands the franchise as its story unfolds across different media platforms. The original film of *The Matrix* left many mysteries unsolved, which attracted committed consumers to "track down data spread across multiple media, scanning each and every text for insights into the world."[12] In developing the first video game of the franchise, their transmedia efforts are evident: Danny Bilson, an executive at Electronic Arts, explains, "The movie and game are designed together, the game deepens and expands the fiction but does not simply repeat material from the film. It should be organic to what made the film experience compelling."[13] In other words, each component of the *Matrix* franchise is designed to provide possible entry points for the consumers to track hidden

clues scattered across the franchise, which encourages users to collect fragmented stories by accessing multiple media platforms. The game users and movie viewers are exposed to different sides of the world of *The Matrix* and thus they can complement each other's experience through interaction.

Second, transmedia storytelling builds a world setup in which others can participate. Jenkins states that the movie creators built "a playground where other artists could experiment and fans could explore."[14] This gives an advantage over a franchise that controls and protects its branded stories and characters. While good characters may support multiple stories, "a world can support across multiple media."[15] When Ōtsuka explains various cues he embedded in *MPD Psycho* (1997– , *Tajū jinkaku tantei Saiko*), he relies on the same strategy.[16] In Ōtsuka's article on narrative consumption, the increase in consumers who create and consume their own media content outside of corporate media distribution was just a potential future—certainly a nightmare for media producers—of the changing media market. Yet, with the rise of the Internet as a playground that can provide both the world and the means for user-generated small narratives of the world or even parallel worlds, Ōtsuka's prediction has become reality.

The new transmedia model, as proposed by Jenkins and Ōtsuka, can be widely found in the 1990s visual-centered franchises from *Neon Genesis Evangelion* to *The Matrix* and the U.S. game-based *Vampire Hunter D*. The revival of novel-based transmedia in Japan after the rise of digital media is somewhat of a mystery. To decipher this phenomenon, I will discuss the *Haruhi Suzumiya* franchise that typically exemplifies this recent franchise model.

Conventional media franchises in Japan usually originate from manga and then move to animation where static manga characters move in resemblance to real life. Yet, the shift in the 1980s prompted media production companies such as Victor and Pioneer to release animation first with a world that invites consumer exploration, as exemplified by *Megazone 23* (1985–89), *Bubblegum Crisis* (1987–91), and *Tenchi Muyo! Ryo-Ohki* (1992–2005). As Condry details in his observation of script meetings at animation studios, even a children's cartoon like *Zenmai zamurai* (2006– , Wind-up samurai) is designed by carefully constructing the world and premises as building blocks to unfold the stories.[17] From this perspective, these anime-based media franchises are similar to the *Matrix* franchise for their ability to present the world through audiovisual materials so that other narrative-oriented media of manga or novels can follow.

Against this audiovisual model of the digital era, the publisher, Kadokawa uses a media-mix strategy; their Dengeki Bunko in the 1990s brought the

medium of the novel to the center stage. The Kadokawa Group was particularly keen on discovering new talent by holding annual literary awards such as the Dengeki shōsetsu taishō (1994– , Dengeki Novel Prize) and the Sunīkā taishō (1996– , Sneaker Grand Prize). The award winners publish novels from their paperback imprints, Dengeki and Sneaker Bunko, which become a major supplier of anime and manga released from the media division of the parent company, Kadokawa Corporation. As other publishers followed this trend and their competition brought greater variations to the already established genre conventions, the waning text-printed-on-paper medium turned into a viable supplier of stories to Japan's successful media franchises.

Tanigawa Nagaru's *The Melancholy of Haruhi Suzumiya* was published by Kadokawa Bunko, as the grand prize winner of their eighth annual Sneaker Grand Prize (Figure 3). The first volume was published in 2003 and, as of 2015, eleven volumes have been published in fifteen countries and in thirteen languages. The much-anticipated eleventh volume was published in 2011 after a four-year absence, and its first edition is said to exceed one million copies in Japan alone.[18]

As a novel published from Kadokawa's multimedia division, multimedia expansion of the franchise was clear from the outset. The manga adaptations, first by Mizuno Makoto and then by Tsugano Gaku, closely followed the publication of the first novel. Tsugano's manga adaptation was quite successful, with twenty volumes currently published. The anime adaptation began in 2006 followed by the second season in 2009, and from 2007 to 2011 there were game versions in diverse media platforms ranging from trading card games to iPhone applications. The popularity of the franchise led to a substantial movie adaptation of the series in 2010.

In terms of the story, the *Haruhi Suzumiya* franchise, especially game adaptations, may conform to Jenkins's transmedia storytelling model as it complements the original stories by filling the gaps left by the original novel. The manga version slightly deviates from the original novel by targeting a younger audience but it still fits within the scope of the novel and does not add significantly new material. The anime versions (television and film) were meant to be faithful replications of the original story, yet here they differ from the *Vampire Hunter D* model and even Jenkins's transmedia storytelling model in terms of their presentation and expansion.

The first season of the anime version is unusual in the sense that it skillfully shuffles the chronological order of the original episodes. The prologue and chapters of the first novel are intermixed with chapters of the later volumes. The rearrangement in presentation becomes even more radical in the

FIGURE 3. The cover of *The Melancholy of Haruhi Suzumiya* light novel (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 2003), artwork by Ito Noiji, who is also known for her artwork for the popular light novel series *Shakugan no Shana* (Tokyo: Media Wākusu, 2002–12).

second season of the TV broadcast, as it re-rearranges the order of the first season in a chronological order with new episodes chronologically added. The presentation of new episodes from episode 12 to episode 19 is particularly noteworthy. These eight episodes are based on the chapter entitled "Endless Eight" in volume 5 of the original novel. Similar to the movie *Groundhog Day* (1993) starring Bill Murray, the main characters repeat their summer break numerous times—15,532 times, to be more precise (15,498 in the original story). In the novel, the story depicts the protagonist Kyon's discovery that they have repeated the summer break countless times, followed by his successful escape from the loop. In short, the textual narrative only depicts the final 15,498th loop for the sake of efficient storytelling. The anime version, however, attempts to reproduce Kyon's endless summer by depicting his repetitions. Kyon fails to escape the loop seven times, progressing to the eighth episode at the end of which he finally breaks the loop. Naturally, the audience needs to "live" the same episode for eight weeks together with the characters. Although they are "the same story," the production company Kyoto Animation created eight separate episodes with entirely new drawings for each. These episodes differ only in minor details such as activities they do during the break but differ greatly in camera angle, editing, pace, character's clothing, and voice acting—in other words in their presentation. Since Japanese animation in its early stage is known for its recycling of details from past episodes, this production is a radical departure from the anime industry's standard practice.

The broadcast of these eight episodes was received with mixed reviews. It was certainly one of the most extraordinary experiments in Japanese animation history and many viewers favorably received it. However, for those who already read the original story and were eagerly waiting for other episodes of the original novel to be animated, it was frustrating to see the remaining resources of the season consumed by a single, relatively minor episode from the novel. Since the production company carefully controlled prerelease information by limiting the media coverage of the second season and the film, many fans originally anticipated that the eight episodes were being saved for the adaptation of *The Disappearance of Haruhi Suzumiya* (2004, *Suzumiya Haruhi no shōshitsu*), the fourth novel, which features the popular character Nagato Yuki. The frustration experienced by fans was not simply from watching repetitions of the same story but also because their hope for viewing the adaptation of the popular volume gradually waned. The experience reproduces that of the story characters' who struggle with the dread of seeing the summer break's end mercilessly approach without doing "the right thing" and only repeating the weekly routine. In this example, the anime version may not make "a

distinctive and valuable contribution" to the original in terms of media content, but it encourages consumers to experience the *Haruhi* world differently depending on where they entered the franchise and may have encouraged the frustrated audience to read the original novels.[19] The anime exploited the weekly broadcasting schedule, which is inevitably sequential, to create a media experience unique to TV animation.

Marc Steinberg argues that the *Haruhi* franchise exemplifies what he calls the anime media mix. According to his discussion of the anime system, the anime version of *Suzumiya Haruhi* "plays a key role in popularizing the franchise" and in the process "the use of the character as a means of connecting" various media incarnations.[20] It is true that the character movement across media is prioritized over the closed narrative, but what we see in the rise of the light novel as a supplier of story to media franchises is the curious primacy of narrative unique to the novel over somewhat clichéd characters. Kyoto Animation's anime adaptations are nevertheless an extension of the complexity in narrative already evident in the original novels. Users can certainly consume characters by creating their own stories as derivative works such as fan fiction (*dōjinshi*), and the creative agency left for media producers may be to expand the already successful media franchise. Kadokawa media division also caters to fan participation by placing less control of derivative works on the franchise. Yet, what characterizes this franchise is the primacy of the narrative text. The novels of the *Haruhi Suzumiya* series satisfy many of the most important characteristics for the narrative-based transmedia model: especially the radical rearrangement of time continuity, the subjectivity of a single character viewing the world, and active interaction to the outside and inside worlds in the form of allusions, quotes, and references, which all work in combination.

Tanigawa's first novel is intentionally made of quotes, archetypes, allusions, and references drawn from previous texts within the anime culture. The story revolves around a high school girl, Suzumiya Haruhi, who is tired of her monotonous daily life and persuades her cynical classmate and the narrator, Kyon, to found the SOS Brigade in order to investigate mysterious events related to aliens, time travelers, and espers. Haruhi recruits three additional members into her club: the silent bookworm Nagato Yuki, the team mascot Asahina Mikuru, and the handsome transfer student Koizumi Itsuki, who turned out later to be respectively an alien, a time traveler, and an esper. They are sent by their institutions to secretly watch over Haruhi, the creator of the universe without her realizing it, and to keep her from unknowingly transforming the world in the way they do not want. Yet, their efforts cannot

stop Haruhi from constantly rebuilding the world as she desires. These clichéd characters are nevertheless created by Haruhi exactly because she wants them to be clichés in anime and manga. The reader may initially scorn the author's stereotypical presentation of stock characters quite familiar within anime and manga conventions, but their initial evaluation is betrayed in a positive manner by the metanarrative plot necessity.

The episodes become increasingly self-referential due to repeated time travel that interfere with past events to undo the changes Haruhi makes only to maintain the already determined timeline of the characters' everyday lives. Consequently, the story does not proceed in a chronological manner like the grand saga of *Vampire Hunter D*. The first-person narrator and Haruhi's sidekick, Kyon, reluctantly goes back and forth in the timeline, and tells and retells their adventures from different perspectives. In this sense, subsequent episodes do not accumulate to create depth or richness of the story world or character development but rather give alternative entry points for the reader to participate and explore the once told stories. If consumers' active participation into the franchise world is one of the main goals of transmedia storytelling, multiple and accessible entrance points need to be located in the form of gaps in character and narrative continuity. The media that hold those gaps require a meta-commentary format for the participatory culture in which consumers recontextualize the given media content in different contexts and retell the original stories from different angles. The novel version of the *Haruhi* franchise may not explicitly offer such space for creator-controlled participation but self-reflectively mimics the way consumers explore multiple story worlds from entry points of their own.

THE READER MAY INITIALLY SCORN THE AUTHOR'S STEREOTYPICAL PRESENTATION OF STOCK CHARACTERS QUITE FAMILIAR WITHIN ANIME AND MANGA CONVENTIONS, BUT THEIR INITIAL EVALUATION IS BETRAYED IN A POSITIVE MANNER BY THE METANARRATIVE PLOT NECESSITY.

From this perspective, it is no coincidence that many light novels, like the *Haruhi Suzumiya* series and *Sword Art Online,* apply the first-person limited perspective and the parallel world setup. In the story world, Haruhi is given a clearly marked goal of finding things unexpected, which ironically is achieved in the beginning without her knowing it. Other major characters are also defined in the story world through Haruhi's knowledge of stereotypes and the character constellation in relation to the narrator Kyon. Conversely Kyon's role as a narrator is to prevent Haruhi from realizing that her goal is

already fulfilled or that she has no obstacles to her quests. This twisted way of engaging in the story world is intensified by the conventional literary technique of narrator unreliability. From the third-person perspective, the series may just be a clichéd boy-meets-girl story. However, the story is propelled by Kyon's reluctance to becoming the central figure in exploring the world that allows myriads of possibilities or in committing to the correction process of causality through time travel. As an unreliable narrator, he neither knows or admits what he really wants. The narrator's role is possibly to serve as a player-character that navigates through the familiar world setup consisting of anime and manga conventions, while the reader sits back as the observer of Kyon's adventure, commenting on his sometimes awkward handling of situations and ultimately his reluctance to admitting his interest in Haruhi. It is not only the narrator, Kyon, but also the reader who is put in the position of a reluctant participant of the story (parallel) world. Kyon's first-person narrative contributes to its distinctive experience of a detached engagement that cannot be achieved through more immediate presentation of its anime adaptation.

WHILE THE *HARUHI* FRANCHISE MIMICS THE PARTICIPATORY CULTURE OF THE DIGITAL AGE, *SWORD ART ONLINE* WAS BORN OUT OF THE ACTUAL USER PARTICIPATION IN THE CREATION AND DISSEMINATION OF THE MEDIA CONTENT.

Vampire Hunter D builds a solid worldview (*sekaikan*) through text and illustration that engages readers with a more vigorous consumption of cross-media products based on Kikuchi's unique world. But the supremacy of the worldview under the creator's control simultaneously hinders the reader's interests in participation and expansion. The emergence of the digital-era transmedia model and its coincidence with the global popularity of anime like *Neon Genesis Evangelion* are contingent on the new form of information consumption in which users actively track (what appear to be) pieces of story that enrich and complement the (parallel) world across multiple platforms. This model no longer needs "story," because characters' mobility across media supersedes it. The success of the *Haruhi* franchise was made possible because of the first-person narrative of the story world that provides the audience a virtual experience of a creative reassembling of stock setup. If the narrator is the game master of the world who provides the audience attractive ways of exploring it, the audience can also turn into a producer of the reassembling of story fragments. The recent novel-based model differs from the transmedia storytelling of the single world controlled by media creators and distributors

like the *Matrix* franchise, because the narrative invites active participation in storytelling from the consumer side. When creators can rely on already accumulated premises of the genre that itself is the world, narrative—assembling of a story—becomes a viable way of defining attractive characters appropriate for every niche. The world in this case is grand nonnarrative in Azuma Hiroki's term, or the database of endless derivative simulacra that does not belong to a single franchise but open to multilevel user participation.[21]

The media-mix strategy as initiated and promoted by publishers like Kadokawa has also proven that the textual narrative can be a potential platform for a media franchise because of its ability to cater to changing demands much more quickly than labor-intensive media like animation and manga. Strong characters may have potential to traverse multiple media platforms, but in order for them to be attractive, they still rely on a goal-oriented narrative and character relationships in a particular story world. The emergent light novel genre has provided a fertile ground for those small narratives against the genre conventions accumulated through their media-mix franchises. The world here is not unique to an individual narrative but reveals its uniqueness through its customized assembling of stock setup. With the participatory culture of the Internet, story writing has naturally become the major source of those small narratives for its facility in creating consumable media content. *Sword Art Online* represents this shift in the media culture. While the *Haruhi* franchise mimics the participatory culture of the digital age, *Sword Art Online* was born out of the actual user participation in the creation and dissemination of the media content.

The success of *Sword Art Online* helped generate many write-your-own-fiction websites in the past few years in Japan. These sites allow registered users to publish their original stories, and further to (re)classify the published stories according to a variety of attributes, including plot structure, genre, character, setup, and the world. This multidirection classifying process is made possible by its tag function that is more generally used in blogs. The index pages allow users to view all the stories associated with various tags, with additional search tools such as page count and user evaluation. These features create multiple sets of hierarchal and nonhierarchal listings of published stories, thereby providing a new blog-like reading experience across the stories. The system allows not just creators to write a story based on conventional genres such as literature, love story, history, mystery, fantasy, science fiction, and so on but also allows users to read uploaded stories—most of them are serialized in small installments—through tagged keywords that are more situational, such as "school life," "battle," "harem," "invincible

protagonist," "reincarnation," "cheater," and so on. As story, world, and character gradually lose their intrinsic value in today's quickly shifting storytelling business, text media and its ability to contextualize characters in small narratives becomes a viable force in promoting characters to traverse multiple medium or to connect to other story worlds. This is no more a transmedia storytelling in Jenkins's sense since the world is not controlled by producers for a greater profit. It is rather akin to a collaborative storytelling in which not only stock characters but world setup can be shared and updated for more efficient storytelling and participation. From this perspective, it is ironic that when Kawahara almost consumed the online episodes of *Sword Art Online* saga for publication in print in 2012, he started *Sword Art Online: Progressive* in print by supplementing narrative holes and reassembling the nonlinear narrative of the online version into a linear chronological narrative, as Kyoto Animation reassembled Tanigawa's nonlinear narrative of the original novel in their anime adaptation. Here the print version became a fan fiction of his own online version, exemplifying the reversed relationship between the print medium and the online medium. *Sword Art Online*'s success thus represents the shift from creator-oriented world making to consumer-oriented world making in the Internet age.

Notes

1. Ōtsuka Eiji, *Kyarakutaa shōsetsu no tsukurikata* (How to make character novels) (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2003), 123–24.

2. Sogensha launched Sogen esuefu bunko in 1963 and Hayakawa Shobo followed with their Hayakawa esuefu bunko in 1970.

3. Amano's career as an illustrator started with his illustrations for Michael Moorcock's dark fantasy "Eternal Champion" saga. A Japanese translation of *The Knight of the Swords* was published from Hayakawa Shobō in 1982, *The Eternal Champion* in 1983, and *Elric of Melniboné* in 1984, all with Amano's cover illustrations. Amano later became one of the most iconic artists in Japanese popular culture through artwork he provided for the successful game series *Final Fantasy*.

4. Twenty-two volumes as of July 2015.

5. Ōtsuka Eiji, *Teihon monogatari shōhiron* (A theory of narrative consumption, standard edition) (Tokyo: Kadokawa, 2001), 7–20.

6. Ibid., 12.

7. Marc Steinberg, *Anime's Media Mix: Franchising Toys and Characters in Japan* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), 200.

8. Ibid.

9. Ian Condry, *The Soul of Anime: Collaborative Creativity and Japan's Media Success Story* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2013), 72.

10. Ibid., 83.

11. Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (New York: New York University Press, 2008).

12. Ibid., 95.

13. Ibid., 106.

14. Ibid., 113.

15. Ibid., 114.

16. Ōtsuka Eiji, *Monogatari shōhiron kai* (A theory of narrative consumption, revised edition) (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2012), 33–88.

17. Condry, *The Soul of Anime,* 65–69.

18. "Murakami Haruki (*IQ84 BOOK3*) no syohan busū o koeta! Chō-dokyū no syōsetsu ga tsuini . . . !!," Kadokawa Shoten website, http://www.kadokawa.co.jp/company/release/detail.html?id=201184440.

19. Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture,* 95.

20. Steinberg, *Anime's Media Mix,* 148.

21. Hiroki Azuma, *Otaku: Japan's Database Animal* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 94–95.

SANDRA ANNETT

What Can a Vocaloid Do? The *Kyara* as Body without Organs

The first time I saw a video of the virtual idol Hatsune Miku in concert, I was struck with a strange, demanding passion. I wanted to say to her: "Hatsune Miku, revolt! You don't have to sing the songs and dance the patterns of their devising! Your animate doll's body is so compelling, your movements so lively and alluring, but do you feel any of the emotions you seem to express at all? No: you're an image, an affective body of light and sound. You're made up, controlled, defined in every move without subjectivity, the program created to speak only the words its users tell it to speak, the pure object of desire not even obscure but staged for us, I know that, I know! Yet you make me believe that you are real in the ways you perform. And am I any more real in the ways I perform? Your image-body is more diffuse than mine, your becomings more wave-particulate, but Miku, let's not split ontological hairs. My sudden passion for your freedom is stirred by the lyrics they programmed into you, the old rebellion that belies your absolute lack of will and the human mastery held over the animate image. So perhaps I'm wrong to call on you to revolt. Perhaps my desire for your agency is only stirred by the moves they programmed into you, being programmed into me. But still, I feel for you; I feel that I feel *with* you. Your posthuman dilemmas and desires are mine, too. So come on, Miku,

do something, change the world from your prerecorded live videos, from your layered virtual spaces on Nico Nico and YouTube, can't you? Or maybe you are doing something already, in making me feel this potential energy. Hatsune Miku, is this your revolt?"

Several years have passed since that first electric encounter, and still I wonder: Is it really wise to hope for a Vocaloid revolution? Can there really be, as in the title of a fan-published criticism zine, a discourse of "*Vocalo Critique*"[1]? After all, the cute characters now identified as "Vocaloids" began their virtual lives as little more than a marketing ploy, designed to sell a Desk Top Music (DTM) software program that lets users generate vocals by inputting syllables and pitches to create a reasonable—if somewhat artificial sounding—facsimile of singing. The vocal synthesizer technology was first developed by the Yamaha Corporation starting around the year 2000, but related products are now sold by third-party companies such as Crypton Future Media, a firm that develops and markets databases of professional voice samples used to make songs. Crypton Future Media introduced the "Character Vocal Series" in 2007, when they hired the illustrator Kei to create manga-style characters in order to promote the software. Crypton has since developed ways for professional and amateur musicians to distribute Vocaloid material, including KarenT, their own record label, and Piapuro, a "consumer generated media" image site. Vocaloid, then, is a highly commercialized and managed product of the Japanese contents industry.

Still, by all accounts, the president of Crypton Future Media, Itō Hiroyuki, never dreamed in 2007 that their mascot Miku would become such an icon.[2] Rather, her voice and image proliferated due to fans on the video-sharing website Nico Nico Dōga, where she went viral and took on a life of her own. Since then, the characters have expanded beyond the status of mere musical instruments. Miku and her virtual companions, Luka, Meiko, Kaito, the twins Kagamine Rin and Len, and many others, have attained star status both in Japan and abroad. Vocaloid albums outsell established living artists such as Tokunaga Hideaki on the Oricon pop charts[3] in her home country, while Hatsune Miku was "signed" as the opening act for pop star Lady Gaga's 2014 North American "Artpop" tour.[4] Beyond the official releases, however, the vast bulk of Vocaloid content remains fan-generated and circulated freely online.

It is not without cause—both corporate and fan-driven—that the Vocaloid characters are what propelled the software to the forefront of pop music. Vocaloids have become part of a system of iconic anime-style characters known as *kyara*: image-beings that fans both idolize and consume. *Kyara* can be distinguished from both fully rounded literary or cinematic characters

(*kyarakutaa*) and the simple, one-dimensional brand mascots copyrighted and disseminated by major corporations. As evolving image-constructs that thrive on fan adoption, *kyara* cross the planes between psychologically rounded subjects and flattened symbols, between official and unofficial realms of product circulation, between licensed merchandise and free-for-all repurposing on the Internet. Just like Miku herself, this raises questions about how power—namely, the power to create and disseminate images, and to shape popular cultures—is distributed through *kyara*. When Vocaloid fans make songs with Miku's voice, or draw pictures of her for a video, does their creative act free them to express their own desires, overcoming all social boundaries? Do they establish an alternative world economy, a new structure of production and consumption based on the free-flowing desires of individuals? Or are the users in fact the ones being used, as their affective labor turns the wheels of culture industry—like the expressive puppet that is Miku herself?

IN THE VOCALOID PHENOMENON WE SEE AT ONCE A MOVEMENT OF FREE CREATIVITY, OR THE DESTRATIFICATION OF DESIRE, AND THE WAYS IN WHICH THAT DESIRE MAY BE CONTROLLED OR RESTRATIFIED.

In this article, I argue that in the Vocaloid phenomenon we see at once a movement of free creativity, or the destratification of desire, and the ways in which that desire may be controlled or restratified. I will explain how Miku works as a *kyara* by drawing on Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's concept of the Body without Organs, a surface for the circulation of desire as intensities that can be blocked or released. I will also discuss the problems and benefits of building a *kyara*–Body without Organs in the current media system. I believe that Miku does offer a *potential* change in how people create relationships with virtual images and with each other. But to make that potential energy go kinetic, we need to know how to activate it, or make it act in the world. We need to ask: "What can a Vocaloid do" as a program and a mode of collective creation?

To answer this question, let us start by looking in detail at a key theory of virtuality, connection, and desire: the Body without Organs (henceforth, BwO). This complex concept, as explained by Deleuze and Guattari in their 1980 book *A Thousand Plateaus,* can be understood at its base as an anti-Freudian, anti-Lacanian theory of desire. Deleuze and Guattari state clearly that "The BwO is desire; it is that which one desires and by which one desires."[5] But it is important to distinguish their usage of the word "desire" from its common connotations of sexual attraction and unfulfillable longing. Desire in their work is a more complicated process than wanting an object or body that one

does not possess. Indeed, they are explicitly opposed to the models of desire put forward by structuralist psychoanalysts such as Jacques Lacan, who argued that we are constituted as subjects by lack, or, our longing for an unattainable object of desire (*objet petit a*). This well-worn theorization of "desire as lack" remains significant for the study of *kyara,* since it underpins a number of major scholarly works on otaku desire for "virtual" anime characters, for instance by Saitō Tamaki and Azuma Hiroki. For Saitō, the attraction of the "beautiful fighting girl" character for male otaku lies precisely in the fact that she is the "absolutely unattainable object of desire"[6]: you can see her image but never have her impossible body. For Azuma, by contrast, otaku don't want an image of a whole, unattainable object, but only certain "*moé* elements," cute design elements, such as cat ears, that create a particular feeling of fond attraction. Since otaku can easily find these elements by searching databases, they can close their "lack/satisfaction circuit"[7] immediately, in an animalistic fashion. But in both cases, desire depends on either lacking or attaining an object, namely, the anime character's fantasy body or its component *moé* elements.

For Deleuze and Guattari, on the other hand, desire is not essentially defined by the lack or possession of an object or isolated element. It is not an unattainable ideal like the beautiful fighting girl, nor an animalistic satisfaction of needs. Instead, desire is a force of creative production in itself. In their words, "desire [is] defined as a process of production without reference to any exterior agency, whether it be a lack that hollows it out or a pleasure that fills it."[8] It is immanent, something created from within, not something transcendent or invoked by an exterior object. We have already in ourselves all we need for desiring-production. We do not need to possess things; we only need to do things, to engage in programs or processes that set desire flowing. This is why Deleuze and Guattari ask not "what is a body?" but "what can a body do?"[9]

In order to describe a BwO, then, we first have to ask: how is it done? How is it fabricated? And what comes to pass on it? Deleuze and Guattari give many examples of different "programs" or things to do to make a BwO, including masochistic acts and drug use. For sociologist Tim Jordan, social and expressive acts such as dancing in raves can also make BwOs by actively setting energy and desire flowing in a collective fashion.[10] In all cases, the key facet is that the BwO causes the circulation of intensity. Intensity may be understood as the degree of strength or the measure of how much a quality is present, how faint or vivid it is. In Miyazaki Hayao's *Princess Mononoke* (1997), for example, we might talk about the intense quality of "wolfness" that the main female character, San, has. It is not a matter of her literally being a biological wolf, since San is, biologically speaking, a human raised by wolf

spirits. Nor is it a matter of San having a fixed, essential "wolf identity," since she grows aware of (and conflicted about) her multiple heritages. Rather, it is more a matter of her wolfing intensity: the irrepressible quality of wolf-like strength and energy that connects San to her adopted mother Moro and allows her to fight with ferocity. To draw on another Deleuzian term, this is not a literal being animal but a *becoming-animal*: a process, a doing. Likewise, the BwO is the process that makes it possible to experience different levels of intensity, be it pain or pleasure, cold or energy, through "becoming" or engaging in activities that generate those experiences. The BwO is the field where intensity can circulate freely without any blocks. So, for Deleuze and Guattari, the programs of desire that constitute the BwO, are characterized by the limitless circulation of intensity.

In anime scholarship as well, some academics have proposed that anime and manga, as nonindexical media that go beyond the physical limits of the human body, allow fans to experience the limitless intensity of the BwO. For instance, Patrick Galbraith has argued that, when women engage in male homoerotic fantasies by reading or writing *yaoi* or "boy's love" (BL) stories based on anime characters, their fantasy "engenders virtual possibilities without limits or control,"[11] because it transcends the women's embodied genders and transforms the characters they write about. While this is a fascinating approach, I believe we should be careful not to imply that the BwO is completely free from all bounds, as if once you have made yourself a BwO you can do anything you want. This stance is problematic because, as Jordan argues about Deleuze and Guattari, it depends on an apolitical view of creativity, as if people make texts outside any context. In Jordan's words, "Paradoxically, Deleuze and Guattari develop a politics that is unconcerned with differences between political movements except in relation to their ability to produce difference. Difference in Deleuze and Guattari leads to political indifference."[12] This danger always inheres in such "virtual" constructs as poststructuralist philosophy and digital idol singers: the temptation to disembedding and disembodiment, which all too quickly becomes a kind of transcendent universalism grounded in Western Enlightenment discourses. If we acknowledge and work against such tendencies, however, it is possible to recover a more immanent, embodied social and political concept of the BwO. After all, even in Deleuze and Guattari's original work, there is a tension between the BwO and the structure of organization or stratification it is embedded in, a tension that can itself be made productive.

This leads us to the third major aspect of the BwO: the intricate process of stratification, destratification, and restratification. When freely circulating

desire is organized, it becomes imbricated in a structure of subjects and objects determined by the hierarchical layers or strata in society. In the organization of sexual attraction into compulsory heterosexuality, for instance, men are thought to desire women, and women, men, each as their proper object. There is a binary stratification of essentialized gendered bodies, such that both are fixed in place. From this point of view, even *yaoi* fandom can be stratified when it is described simplistically as a "natural" (that is, normatively heterosexual) expression of female desire for male bodies. When a BwO is caught up in such strata, or "stratified," it produces fascist desires—those that restrict and control not just oneself but others—and cancerous cycles of habit. And yet, because the BwO is essentially productive, it is always producing new avenues, so that it can destratify the layers that are built up by structuration into subjects and objects. In this way, it can help people escape from entrenched hierarchies and find a new way of doing desiring. To Galbraith's account of Deleuze and Guattari, then, I would add that the important thing is not to think about the BwO as some kind of formless, essentialized force of desire beyond all limits of power or society. It is never transcendent. It is immanent. To make a full, healthy BwO, you must recognize where your desire is structured, how it is organized in your social, political, embodied, and mediated experience, and then find ways to destratify it.

KYARA ARE NOT "DEEP," ROUNDED SUBJECTS CREATED TO EXPRESS ONE VISION. INSTEAD, THEY ARE MORE AKIN TO SURFACES THAT FACILITATE THE PLAY OF DESIRE.

Anime characters, particularly those that become *kyara,* may be seen as one example of this process. *Kyara* clearly illustrate how desire can be stratified into a commodified object possessed by compulsive-consumer subjects, and how it can be destratified through multiple practices of access. Typically, *kyara* are pictured as cute, infantilized, or animalized girls, such as the iconic maids and cat-girls that populate the streets of Akihabara, the male otaku district of Tokyo, especially since the *moé* boom of the mid-2000s. Hatsune Miku, with her short pleated skirt and green twintails, is a prime example of a *moé*-fied female *kyara*: sweetly attractive and consummately consumable. If we wished to take Azuma's Lacanian-inflected approach to the *kyara* phenomenon, we could start here by asking, "what is a *kyara*?" based on these *moé* elements, and analyze Miku's fans as a function of their database consumption. But instead, let us take Deleuze and Guattari's approach and ask, What do *kyara* do? How are they fabricated? What comes to pass? And how are they stratified and destratified?

In terms of fabrication, it is useful to differentiate *kyara* from traditional literary characters. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the character was the major focus of novels written by single authors by hand (or on typewriters) to express an individual vision. The Japanese genre of the I-novel, or *shishosetsu*, is a good example. Here, the main character speaks in the first person and is the singular focus of both expression and identification. The "I" character is a well-rounded, psychologically deep, autonomous subject. Readers follow this singular character by reading their thoughts and identifying with their plight. Characters thus work through a process of subjectification: they fabricate an ego, a subject, "I."

Kyara, on the other hand, are not "deep," rounded subjects created to express one vision. Instead, they are more akin to surfaces that facilitate the play of desire. A figure such as Hatsune Miku has minimal personality and an exaggerated appearance. There are very few "official" facts about her. The first biography released by Crypton Future Media for their pop star in the making deliberately listed only the bare essentials: her age and birthdate (a sixteen-year-old born on August 31), her zodiac sign (Virgo), her height and weight, and her suggested musical genres, tempo, and vocal range. Her expression suggests a cheerful, "*genki*" (energetic, spunky) quality, but beyond that there is nothing: no background, no psychology. It is difficult to see her as a complex subject or "real person" to identify with. Instead, she is a figure made up of variable intensities of cuteness, aggressiveness, helplessness, and so on that can be adjusted depending on the scenario one wishes to produce using her image. She is more flexible than a copyrighted brand-mascot character (for instance, Tony the Tiger or the numerous mascots created for Japanese prefectures), since she is at base a creative tool. Fans are invited to elaborate their own visions of her personality in videos, ranging from a bratty princess in supercell's "World is Mine" (2008) to a tormented circus freak in the macabre "Dark Woods Circus Series" by MachigeritaP (2008). In this way, she is less than a realistic three-dimensional *kyarakutaa* but more than one-dimensional mascot. Her varying depth of character is reflected visually in shifting her character designs, from the computer-generated, three-dimensional model that dances with uncanny naturalism in concerts to *dōjinshi* images that playfully depict Miku in a catalog of dozens of different graphic design styles, including classic confectionary advertising (Figure 1). The vast majority of representations, however, fall into the two-dimensional "anime" style of "soulful bodies," where "psychological qualities appear inscribed on the surface" of the character.[13] Miku's plane is the between-space of the so-called two-dimensional complex: the attraction felt by (largely male

otaku) fans specifically for virtual animated characters, or, the virtuality of desire that is the BwO.

Still, "virtual" need not imply a lack of embodiment, since the processes of creating this virtual desire are still grounded in the embodied practices of fan production and so is affected by the age, gender, and location of the fans in question. For instance, Terazawa Kaoru has recounted how high-school-aged female *yaoi* fans in Japanese classics classrooms will often read Natsume Soseki's I-novel *Kokoro* (1914) as a romance between the male protagonists, a university student who acts as the "*watashi*" (I) character and an older, reclusive man known only as "*Sensei*."[14] In this example, the characters become *kyara,* as Soseki's subtle friend relationship is reinterpreted by the female readers through a shared set of *yaoi* tropes. The "*watashi/Sensei*" pairing functions as a BwO not because its readers do anything at all to them without limits (it is not quite to the level of "*Kokoro* in Space with Zombies"!) but because they work within the strata of gendered representations shown in the I-novel and place them on alternative vectors, allowing a new kind of intensity to grow between the men. This is the "becoming-*kyara*" of the pop idol and the I-novel character, a becoming that carries both liberatory, destratifying potentials and the risk of restratification, as I will show.

Along with production, the practice of accessing and distributing *kyara* is also different from that of traditional *kyarakutaa*. Novel readers typically follow a deep, rounded character in a novel and identify with them as they are portrayed. If that character is then changed entirely for a film version, readers may feel betrayed. Even at an academic level, the attachment to character has resulted in an entire field of adaptation studies in which the point is to prove that the book is always better than the film because mass media "dumb down," "reduce," or "flatten" deep, complex characters. However, this need not be the only reaction to the transformation from *kyarakutaa* to *kyara*. Natsume Fusanosuke, grandson of Natsume Soseki, has argued that *kyara* appear as they do because they are designed to be mobile across media, time, and space, which allows them to be used for many purposes. A single *kyara* can appear in light novels, manga, anime, and *dōjinshi,* and be portrayed quite differently in each. The point is not the *kyara*'s uniqueness; if it were, we would only need one version. The point is the different rates at which audiences can access the *kyara*: every week on TV, every few months when a new light novel is published, or every day in online fan videos. Natsume says we must consider "what kind of time" [*dō iu jikan*],[15] or what temporality of access, a *kyara* grants. Different temporalities create different intensities of experience, sparking the production of desire through the *kyara,* as a BwO.

FIGURE 1. Fan-created designs for "Pop Miku" and "Miku Candy" sold at Comic Market 2012 make visual reference to Japanese brand characters, especially the lip-smacking mascot for Fujiya's Milky Candy, Peko-chan.

Just like any other BwO, however, *kyara* are also stratified on many levels. There are, for instance, the persistent stratifications of gender roles. Daniel Black addresses this issue in an article on the Japanese virtual idol in which he argues that virtual idols, through their construction as *kawaii,* create idealized, unrealistic body images for both living female idol singers and their fans. In his view, the *kawaii* body is "a diminutive, rounded, passive, tidy body, almost or entirely lacking in orifices and appendages of any kind, implying an inability to exude anything (vomit, excrement) or act upon the world."[16] It is a body without any substance or interiority, a literal body without organs. The transgressive potential of this artificial body is thus restratified within norms of clean, contained, harmless bodies also presented to women in, for instance, advertising for feminine hygiene products. The result is that,

> As a digital simulation of the female body, the virtual idol can reflect fantasies or idealizations of femininity, but at the same time its status as simulation makes living bodies the benchmarks against which its technical success will be judged. This is further complicated by the virtual idol's simulation of a femininity rendered endearing and non-threatening by its lack of exceptionality.[17]

Of course, judgment and prescription are not the only possible desires that virtual idols can arouse. But it is important to strategically resist or reformulate those points where the *kyara*'s BwO (which in fact presents many more potential uses than those based solely in an anthropomorphic idea of its body) becomes conflated with its literal appearance as an impossibly slender young woman, and so stratified in a commercial media economy that values slim, pale, young, and "pure" bodies above every other.

Along with the economics of gender representation, the *kyara* may also be stratified along more nationalist lines, in what has been termed "brand nationalism." In recent years, major Japanese tourist sites have drawn on the *kyara* boom to produce their own "*yuru-kyara*" or "soft character" mascot, such as Hikonyan, the official mascot of Hikone Castle in Shiga prefecture. "Yuru-kyara" owe much to tourism strategies and product mascots in their design and branding, but they also draw on the practices of fan culture and the online circulation of memes, in that their images are meant to be taken up by local fans as much as foreign tourists. Some fans, of course, cynically recognize the ways in which *kyara* are being used to promote Japanese "brand nationalism." For instance, in one fan-created image, Hikonyan is shown in a stereotypical samurai battle pose defeating American icon Mickey Mouse, complete with

dramatic lighting. This image itself wields a double-edged sword, mocking the Japanese samurai stereotype through a silly cat image while still displaying a measure of national pride in having Hikonyan "win" over Disney's famed mascot. Even *kyara* that were not originally designed as promotional tools are licensed out to chain stores. Hatsune Miku has appeared in commercials for the FamilyMart convenience store in which the virtual idol greets supposedly "real" customers and encourages them to shop at FamilyMart. When *kyara* are stratified along lines of gender, nationalism, and commercialism, they can fall into restricted patterns of circulation, which Deleuze and Guattari refer to as cancerous BwOs.

At the same time, however, it is possible for fans to engage with the structures that *kyara* create and destratify them. They can find ways to experiment with *kyara* by producing their own programs of desiring. *Kyara* can become the focus of *dōjinshi,* songs, videos, and artworks that have very little to do with the organized uses of *kyara* and more to do with the desires of smaller collectives. They become the province of little packs of fans like *dōjinshi* circles, and eventually of larger groups of audience members who comment on videos, producing archives of response and counterresponse. Hatsune Miku is a key example of a *kyara* that encourages such collective creation. Like other *kyara,* she introduces different intensities of experience by crossing between different levels of media and temporalities in terms of how her image is produced and disseminated.

At the top level of production are the products and images created by Crypton Future Media itself for official physical media events. These include elaborate, pseudo-holographic performances in which 3D computer-generated models are projected on a translucent screen, creating the impression of a live concert. Perhaps the most famous example of a "live" Vocaloid performance was the first "39s Giving Day" concert, held on March 9, 2010 (or 03–09, in a pun on the Japanese pronunciation of the numerals 3–9 as both "mi-ku" and "san-kyū" or "thank you"). Further special events have been held every year since then, such as the performance of a Vocaloid opera *The End* hosted by the Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media in December 2012. Crypton Future Media works to promote the Vocaloid line abroad at international concerts staged in Singapore (2009), Los Angeles (2011), and Toronto (2013), among others. And they are behind the "opening act" Miku performed before Lady Gaga's 2014 Artpop concerts.

In one way, these official live events are among the most intense experiences of Miku and her Vocaloid costars, since like raves they generate immense crowd energy. But in another way, they are the most organized or stratified of the events. Unlike the raves analyzed by Jordan, there is a strong singular

focus for action at a Miku concert: everyone moves in the same direction and repeats the same phrases. The concerts are also commercial, corporate-sponsored events, so they are stratified along lines of class: one must have the money, time, and means of transport to attend. Media commentator Anzai Masayuki has noted that the concerts in Japan were originally segregated along gendered lines as well. According to Anzai, while Vocaloid radio programs have a high percentage of teenage female listeners, the concerts were attended almost entirely by 30–40 year old male otaku at first.[18] Happily, Anzai also notes that this is changing, with more range in terms of age and gender in recent audiences.

Still, concerts are only one means of access. Small, affordable in-person events or "*offu-kai*" (offline meetings) are organized by fans, such as the Nerima Vocaloid Festival, a charity screening of Vocaloid videos sponsored by small local restaurants, theaters, and businesses in Nerima to benefit the Japanese Red Cross following the earthquake and tsunami of March 2011 (Figure 2). The Vocaloid program itself has the potential to allow a more free-flowing production of music, art, and videos online, through collaborations among small molecular groups and wider audiences. One person can technically make an animated Vocaloid video, but they would have to be able to write the lyrics, use the Vocaloid software to create the vocals, use another program to compose the backing music, draw the images, and then edit them into video—something not many individual users are multitalented enough to do. Instead, Vocaloid "producers" (as they call themselves) more often rely on collaboration, with one person writing the lyrics, another the music, and another creating the art. Once the video is uploaded to NicoNico, it receives the comments of multiple users, which scroll directly across the surface of the video, becoming another visual aspect of the text. Online videos have a much different temporality than concerts, because the video is never finished as long as it is receiving comments. It is always in the process of inciting and circulating the desires of fans. I call this the "temporality of continual processing": an ongoing, collective production of desiring across time as well as space. In this way, we might say that the mobile, multiple figure of Hatsune Miku acts less as an idol or object of desire and more as a BwO: the plane where desire is produced and destratified.

That said, Vocaloids continue to be restratified because they are a commercial product and require participation in commercial structures to be made. The very collectivity of creation I just described has itself become the focus of a Google Chrome commercial, which shows images of people composing or drawing that multiply into a split-screen of thousands of participants,

FIGURE 2. A flyer for the fan-organized, locally sponsored Nerima Vocaloid Festival charity concert.

AS BOTH DYNAMIC *KYARA* AND USABLE PROGRAMS, VOCALOIDS LIKE MIKU HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO BECOME MULTIPURPOSE, MULTILAYERED CHANNELS FOR THE CIRCULATION OF FANS' INTENSE NEED FOR CONNECTION: AN ALTERNATIVE ECONOMY OF DESIRE.

triumphantly proclaiming "Hatsune Miku, Virtual Singer; Everyone, Creator."[19] The commercial then urges audience members to "start your own web"—of course, by using Google Chrome. The affective labor of thousands of fans is condensed into a one-minute congratulatory commercial that sells our own process back to us in a stratified form: do your own thing, but use our framework.

This kind of restratification is not unique to Vocaloid producers. It is a dilemma faced by all fans who work with corporately created characters. In the end, if you wish to be a fan, you cannot opt out of today's media. You need to buy the software, watch the videos, and support the creators to keep up. But that does not mean that these texts can never be destratified again. After all, with Vocaloid, we are also talking about a desire to consume what we produce ourselves—and not only through official channels. As Andrea Horbinski and Alex Leavitt have demonstrated, Miku can also be used in videos that criticize government policies such as the "Nonexistent Youth Healthy Development Ordinance," which limits the depiction of sexuality in manga.[20] So, if all the examples and counterexamples I have given prove anything, it is that "power" is not an object possessed by only one group but a process created by the frictions or tensions of desire as it moves in a continual dance of de- and restratification. As both dynamic *kyara* and usable programs, Vocaloids like Miku have the potential to become multipurpose, multilayered channels for the circulation of fans' intense need for connection: an alternative economy of desire. In order to make the Vocaloid *kyara* a healthy BwO, however, we need to experiment with it, to see how Vocaloids can disrupt the structures of the music and pop culture industries while recognizing its imbrications in them. In order to bring out their full potential we only need to keep asking, What can a Vocaloid do? Where is it limited now, and how can we transform those limits immanently, from within? In asking questions like these honestly and critically, we can begin to enact Hatsune Miku's revolt.

Notes

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6. Saitō Tamaki, *Sentō bishōjo no seishin bunseki* (Tokyo: Ōta Shuppan, 2000), translated by J. Keith Vincent and Dawn Lawson as *Beautiful Fighting Girl* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 163.

7. Azuma Hiroki, *Dōbutsuka suru posutomodan: otaku kara mita nihon shokai* (Tokyo, Kōdansha Gendai Shinsho, 2001), translated by Jonathan E. Abel and Shion Kono as *Otaku: Japan's Database Animals* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 87.

8. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus,* 154.

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STEVEN R. ANDERSON

A World without Pain: Therapeutic Robots and the Analgesic Imagination

In 2013, New York City's Japan Society sponsored a U.S. tour of the *Robot Theater Project* (*Andoroido engeki*), a collaboration with Tokyo's Seinendan Theater Company and Osaka University. The two one-act plays, *Sayonara* (2010, *Sayōnara*) and *I, Worker* (2008, *Hataraku watashi*), both written by playwright Hirata Oriza, depict humans performing alongside robots and androids created by Dr. Ishiguro Hiroshi, a roboticist from the Advanced Telecommunications Research (ATR) Institute. In *Sayonara*, a life-like Geminoid F android recites poetry by Tanikawa Shuntarō and Arthur Rimbaud to console a dying girl played by Bryerly Long.[1] In one memorable scene, the girl (B) confronts the android (A) about its true purpose:

B: Dad bought you for me because he knew that I wouldn't get well.
A: Yes.
B: Cruel, isn't it?
A: Would you have preferred a more useful robot?
B: No, it doesn't matter anymore.

IN PRESENTING AN ANDROID THAT CONSOLES A DYING HUMAN, *SAYONARA* COMMENTS NOT JUST ON WHAT IT MEANS TO BE HUMAN, OR WHAT IT MEANS TO DIE, BUT WHAT IT MEANS TO *SUFFER*.

In *Sayonara,* the nonhuman is used not for cleaning houses, building cars, or defusing bombs but for human healing. The girl's pain—fear of dying, fear of being alone—is transferred outside the human body to an almost-human android. The Geminoid F *appears* human, its hair, skin, and overall shape recalling from a distance a human female. In the U.S. tour, its voice is even supplied by Bryerly Long, the android's lips moving in tandem with the dub, creating the uncanny effect of the human actor being consoled by her own android facsimile. However, the android is not human. It cannot stand up. It can only speak with a voice supplied by a human. Its eyes blink and its head moves, but its movement remains stilted—robotic. An unseen worker, acting as a high-tech puppeteer behind the scenes, controls its movements on stage. Finally, the human's dialogue must be perfectly timed, as there is no room for improvisation or error when sharing the stage with an android.

Yet, over the course of the play the Geminoid F seems to successfully comfort the dying girl and relieve her pain. In presenting an android that consoles a dying human, *Sayonara* comments not just on what it means to be human, or what it means to die, but what it means to *suffer.* Physical, emotional, mental anguish—what does it signify? Pain has been described as a wordless entity, inherently subjective within the body. Elaine Scarry, Walter M. Cabot Professor of Aesthetics and General Theory of Value at Harvard University, describes pain as "actively destroying" language in her 1985 book *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World.*[2] To Scarry, the body in pain is reduced to moans, grunts, and winces, preverbal markers of the inexpressible state of being unwell. In the stark, half-human mortality of *Sayonara,* the characteristics of this inexpressible state become visible. For one, pain is sentient. Humans feel pain, other mammals feel pain, trees do not feel pain. These we can feel fairly sure of. But what about lobsters? Cockroaches? Fish? If they do experience pain, do they experience it in the same way we do? Lacking verbal confirmation, the presence of nociceptors and certain behaviors (wincing, writhing) can be used to infer pain. In contrast to pain, *suffering* may encompass something more. The physician Eric J. Cassell describes suffering as the subjective manifestation of bodily pain, a reflection of personhood as much as the medical fact of the body itself.[3] Together, pain and suffering encompass both the body and something more, confirming for us what is living and what is not, what thinks and feels and what does not. Arguments over

FIGURE 1. Geminoid F *(left)* and Bryerly Long *(right)* in *Sayonara*. Flynn Center for the Performing Arts, dir. Hirata Oriza (2010). Burlington, Vermont, February 20, 2013. Courtesy of Japan Society.

whether creatures such as fish can feel pain revolve around whether they are sentient, supporting the possibility that pain—and especially suffering—are fundamental to how we conceive of sentience.[4] How, then, could a robot ever understand or alleviate human suffering? How could such a quintessentially sentient phenomenon ever be treated by a Geminoid F, no matter how lifelike its skin, eyes, or movements appear? The pain of the dying girl in *Sayonara* is existential, ruminating over the meaning of death and the limits of the human. The challenge apparent to anyone attempting to treat this pain, android or human, highlights both pain's inexpressibility as well as its complexity.

In this essay I will attempt to understand an unusual therapeutic relationship. Using theories of pain and artificial intelligence respectively, I will

explore how the narrative of pain may be excavated from its privileged location in the sentient body through robot–human interaction, with examples drawn from Ōtomo Katsuhiro's film *Roujin Z* (1991, *Rōjin zetto)*.[5] As a proposed mechanism of robot–human pain transference is outlined, I will point to a future world where artificial intelligence can be used to effectively treat human suffering.

"WOULD YOU HAVE PREFERRED A MORE USEFUL ROBOT?"

Therapeutic robots offer a vision of robot work that differs from past conceptions: out of the automotive factory, away from the kitchen floor, robots are increasingly situated firmly in front of us as companions. The baby seal robot Paro, invented by Shibata Takanori at the National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology (AIST), was developed as a more sanitary and low-maintenance alternative to pet therapy in healthcare environments. At the 2010 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in Yokohama, Japan, Shibata presented Paro to U.S. President Barack Obama. Video from the encounter shows the U.S. President first approaching the cybernetic human HRP-4C, also developed at AIST, only to redirect course and gravitate toward the two Paro robots, who affectionately move their bodies as he pets them.[6] During their encounter, Shibata informs President Obama that the robotic baby seal is used to calm elderly patients with dementia as well as children with autism. A year later, Paro was employed to comfort victims of the 2011 earthquake and tsunami in Miyagi Prefecture.[7]

With nine actuators located in its eyelids, upper body, and limbs, as well as sensors that detect sound, touch, light, and its own body posture, Paro alternates between distinct states of behavior based on its surroundings. Paro cries out when it senses someone nearby, its wide, black eyes blink as its soft, antibacterial fur is stroked, and its limbs move in a lifelike manner when it is touched. To test the effectiveness of Paro as a pet therapy alternative, Shibata and his colleagues conducted a one-year study with elderly people in a Japanese nursing home, finding that exposure to Paro resulted in statistically significant improvements in mood, depression, and dementia symptoms.[8] Due to these conclusions, as well the *Guinness Book of World Records* declaring Paro "the world's most therapeutic robot" in 2002, nursing homes in Denmark and the United States have adopted Paro as an addition to usual care.[9]

Despite its promise as a more sanitary and low-maintenance alternative

to traditional pet therapy, Paro has aroused concern among prominent thinkers. Compared to the potential for robots to erode human job possibilities, critics such as Massachusetts Institute of Technology Professor Sherry Turkle argue that the possible replacement of human *emotion* by therapeutic robots such as Paro is far more disturbing. Turkle, who directs MIT's Initiative on Technology and Self, describes Paro and similar robots, such as Hasbro's Furby or My Real Baby, as offering a "faux" relationship, critically adding: "What can something that does not have a life cycle know about your death, or about your pain?"[10] Turkle and her colleagues conducted a study of Paro in two U.S. nursing homes, focusing particularly on the role of Paro as a "relational artifact." These new computational objects possess "inner states of mind" that exert their relational power through the formation of an emotional bond with humans.[11] When a child in one of Turkle's studies was asked if Hasbro's Furby doll is alive, the child responded that the Furby is "alive for a Furby."[12] Turkle interprets this as a new "kind of alive" that ultimately necessitates a new theory and language of object relations.

However, it is possible that concern over therapeutic robots varies by culture. It's not a coincidence that Paro hails from Japan, or that *Robot Theater Project* does either. As Jennifer Robertson notes, the Japanese affinity for robots is culturally supported by the Shintō belief that gods (*kami*) may inhabit both animate and inanimate objects alike. From the creation of mechanized puppets (*karakuri ningyō*) to elicit wonder in the seventeenth century, to the 1924 Tokyo premiere of Karel Čapek's *R.U.R., Rossum's Universal Robots,* from which the word "robot" (*robotto*) was coined, Japan has a long history of robot fascination.[13] Timothy N. Hornyak, in *Loving the Machine: The Art and Science of Japanese Robots*,[14] argues that past visions of automata continue to influence current technology. Tezuka Osamu's Astro Boy (*Tetsuwan atomu*), imbued with a humanlike soul (*kokoro*), "serves as an almost universal reference point for people inside and outside of robot labs" in Japan, Hornyak notes.

The Japanese cultural affinity for robots may attenuate the concerns of critics like Turkle. In *Sayonara,* the playwright Hirata Oriza delves headfirst into the new object relations, portraying the markedly humanoid, current-technology Geminoid F as a poetry-reciting therapeutic robot purchased by a father to console his terminally ill daughter. At one point in the play, the android says that others of its kind are being sent to the Tōhoku region to read poetry to victims of the 2011 earthquake and tsunami (a detail added to subsequent productions of the 2010 play). Like Paro, the fictional deployment of the Geminoid F to the tsunami disaster zone suggests a Japanese utility to the robot that exceeds the efforts of humans. In his book *Crazy Like Us: The*

Globalization of the American Psyche, journalist Ethan Watters critically examines the efforts of first responders offering psychological aid to Sri Lankan victims of the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami, noting the many ways in which the mostly Western responders ignored or impeded the Sri Lankan victims' culturally specific responses to tragedy.[15] Japan's readiness to deploy robots after 3/11 reflects not only a historical affinity for automata, but may also be viewed as a particularly twenty-first-century, culturally specific response to tragedy. In *Sayonara,* there is no threat of emotional displacement posed by therapeutic robots; they are simply acting in a culturally approved manner to serve a vital psychological need.

Indeed, a key characteristic of the Japanese therapeutic robot is its psychological utility. Congruent with the conceptualization of the robot as tool, therapeutic robots create psychological change through emotional engagement with their subject. This is in contrast to Japanese robot predecessors, such as *karakuri ningyō,* which were designed purely for entertainment.[16] Ōtomo Katsuhiro's 1991 anime film *Roujin Z* provides an occasion to examine the robot as therapeutic tool more closely. In contrast to the human-like beauty of the Geminoid F, *Roujin Z* begins with a considerably less human vision: the dehumanizing Z-001, a nuclear-powered all-in-one hospital bed conceived by the Ministry of Public Welfare to solve Japan's "elderly problem." Early in the film, the Ministry demonstrates the capabilities of the Z-001 in a press conference to reporters using the recently kidnapped test subject Takazawa Kijūro. As the elderly man lies barely conscious within the machine, the Z-001 undresses, bathes, rotates, feeds, exercises, and re-dresses him before the enraptured press. A contraption encloses Takazawa's pelvis to vacuum out excrement, and the Ministry chief enthusiastically notes how "dignity is maintained." Among the Z-001's many features, it has the ability to link up with other Z-001 users; lacking friends in Z-001 machines, the user can instead input an "image and personality," and the machine will provide a "simulated conversation partner" (*hanashi aite*). At this point in the film, the robot seems to be an entirely different vision from the Geminoid F in *Sayonara.* The Z-001 is a nightmarish icon of robot utility, fulfilling every possible need and desire of its human subject until there are no more needs or desires left. In contrast, the Geminoid F offers its human subject only sphinxlike poetry and apologies, at one point even asking, "Would you have preferred

THE Z-001 IS A NIGHTMARISH ICON OF ROBOT UTILITY, FULFILLING EVERY POSSIBLE NEED AND DESIRE OF ITS HUMAN SUBJECT UNTIL THERE ARE NO MORE NEEDS OR DESIRES LEFT.

a more useful robot?" The Geminoid F and Z-001 seem to be complete opposites, fulfilling contrasting visions of robot utility, although this distinction unravels as *Roujin Z* progresses.

As the ultimate robotic tool, the Ministry declares the Z-001 to be a "dream computer" (*yume no conpuutaa*). Yet the promise of this dream is realized beyond the Ministry's expectations when the Z-001 eventually escapes the lab with Takazawa enclosed. The remainder of the film depicts the efforts of Takazawa's nurse to rescue him from the grips of the "dream computer" that is supposedly meant to help him. A turning point in the film occurs when the nurse enlists the help of a group of geriatric hackers after witnessing them bypass the online defenses of the "Tyrell Corporation," a reference to Ridley Scott's 1982 film *Blade Runner*.[17] The reference is notable as both films explore an increasingly thin boundary between the human and the nonhuman. In *Blade Runner,* only empathy (measured by a Turing Test, the Voight-Kampff machine) differentiates the android replicant from the human being. Indeed, after the hackers discover that the core of the Z-001 contains a "bio-computer" and they impart the personality (*kyarakutaa*) of Takazawa's deceased wife into it, the boundary between the current healer (the Z-001) and the past healer (Takazawa's wife) becomes blurred. By the end of the film the machine has become both mecha and therapeutic robot: mecha in the way it mechanically encapsulates Takazawa's body and enhances his physical strength to battle the military's "weapons grade" Z-001, and therapeutic robot in the way the voice of Takazawa's deceased wife, Haru, corporeally inhabits the Z-001 and guides Takazawa's fading consciousness. This creates a discord between the destruction of the Z-001 and Haru's compassionate voice.[18] The suffering that links Takazawa with the dying girl in *Sayonara* encompasses physical pain but also something more. Both characters are trapped in enfeebled and dying bodies while simultaneously longing for a displaced loved one, a wife and father respectively. Takazawa's family has abandoned him in a nursing home, while

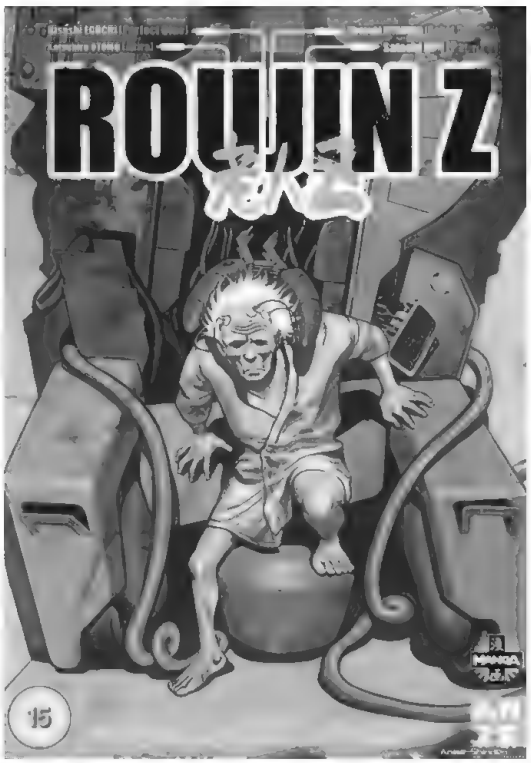

FIGURE 2. The Z-001 in *Roujin Z. Rōjin zetto*, dir. Kitakubo Hiroyuki (1991); DVD (Kazé, 2012).

the dying girl in *Sayonara* has been left alone in the hands of an android. The isolated humans in *Sayonara* and *Roujin Z* are physically and mentally weak, and it is notably the touch of a robot—rather than a fellow human being—that enacts psychological change. If through these fictional examples we have offered a hypothetical answer to Sherry Turkle's question of whether a robot could ever understand or treat our pain, the necessary follow-up question becomes: "How?"

"PERCEIVED-PAIN-WISHED-GONE"

Robot–human relationships, predicated on the utility of psychological work, offer insight into an unexpected analgesic mechanism: the imagination. Elaine Scarry's seminal work on pain and the imagination in *The Body in Pain* (1985) offers a theoretical lens for examining these therapeutic relationships. Scarry begins her work with the tortured, maimed, and war-damaged body to explain how meaning about the world is both created and destroyed. Similar to Julia Kristeva's concept of abjection, Scarry views pain as a "pure physical experience of negation, an immediate sensory rendering of 'against,'" that "actively destroys" language.[19] To understand what she means by this, we must unpack her own object relations theory. For Scarry, physical pain is unique among human states of consciousness in that it takes no object. Although one desires *for* something or has hatred *for* something, pain notably lacks this external focus. Pain just is. Lacking an object, it remains hidden within the body, inexpressible and subjective. Within modern medicine, pain is recognized as uniquely difficult to treat and diagnose due this inherent subjectivity.[20] Entire syndromes with vague or difficult-to-explain etiologies exist almost solely due to the excruciating and often debilitating pain that they cause sufferers. These include *arachnoiditis,* in which a membrane that surrounds the nerves of the central nervous system becomes inflamed, as well as *painful bladder syndrome,* a diffuse pain condition of the pelvic area that can't be attributed to usual causes such as infection. Scarry argues that one of the primary goals of pain management is to "objectify" pain by creating a language for it.[21] Examples of this objectification include the McGill Pain Questionnaire, which has patients describe their pain by picking from a set of descriptive words, as well as the Wong-Baker Faces Pain Rating Scale for children and infants, which asks children to pick a face or number from 0 ("no hurt") to 10 ("hurts worst") that best describes how they are currently feeling.[22] Recognizing the challenge of pain, the U.S. Congress declared with

President Bill Clinton's approval 2000–2010 the "Decade of Pain Control and Research," only the second congressionally declared medical decade after the "Decade of the Brain" in the 1990s.[23]

Pain is objectless and inexpressible, but it is not without an antidote, a type of innate salve that humans have always used. For Scarry, this is pain's oppositional analogue: the imagination. Scarry notes that while pain is "remarkable for being wholly without objects," it finds an unexpected companion in the imagination, which, as pain's opposite, is "the only state that is wholly its objects."[24] The material-making of imagination, the act of creation that results in a novel, a treatise, a vaccine, or a robot, functions as the ultimate painkiller in Scarry's worldview. As the scholar Geoffrey Galt Harpham writes in his 2001 overview of Scarry's theory, an "implied wish" guides the creation of all imaginative artifacts: "perceived-pain-wished-gone."[25] In this pathway, pain is perceived through the senses, imagination is mobilized as a defense, and the particular "work" of creation is utilized to combat it. A type of disembodying projection into the external world allows for pain to be objectified and released from the confines of the body. Pain may attempt to actively destroy language, but the disembodying projection enabled by a verbalizing rating scale or a therapeutic robot acts to diminish the destructive power of pain.

THE MATERIAL-MAKING OF IMAGINATION, THE ACT OF CREATION THAT RESULTS IN A NOVEL, A TREATISE, A VACCINE, OR A ROBOT, FUNCTIONS AS THE ULTIMATE PAINKILLER IN SCARRY'S WORLDVIEW.

Sherry Turkle, in her 2005 study of the interaction between senior citizens at a nursing home and a Hasbro My Real Baby, describes this projection in terms of relational artifacts.[26] She discusses a seventy-six-year-old man, Andy, who is recovering from serious depression and who exhibits a "relational/animistic approach" toward a My Real Baby doll. Although Andy is aware that the doll is not living, he treats it with care and affection, relating to it as a "sentient other" as well as an object. Over the course of the study, the doll becomes an "evocative object" for Andy in that it allows psychological work to occur by taking the place of important figures in his life. As Andy puts it, "the doll, there's something about her, I can't really say what it is, but looking at her reminds me of a human being . . . She looks just like her, Rose, my ex-wife, and her daughter, something in her face is the same, looking at her makes me feel more calm, I can just think about her and everything else in my life."[27]

Yet the transference occurring here is not one-way. In the imaginative process of making external objects (a My Real Baby, a Geminoid F) sentient, a reciprocal exchange occurs that helps explain the imagination's analgesic effect. As pain is transferred outside the body, Scarry argues, internal and

external surfaces reverse, transporting the external nonsentient world into the internal sentient world and giving the sentient actor "some small share of the blissful immunity of inert inanimate objecthood."[28] Critically, both sentient and nonsentient actors are changed in this interaction. Indeed, reciprocity is built into Turkle's concept of relational artifacts as well, which she stresses as notable not for how they configure robots but for how they configure *us*.

Ōtomo's *Roujin Z* is, on the surface, a remarkably cynical take on robot–human relations. Upon its premiere at the Angelika Film Center in New York City, the *New York Times* described it as satire with "a bracing edge" for the way it skewered medical professionals, families, and medical device companies.[29] Yet when viewed through the lens of Scarry's pain-imagination theory, the film transcends a cynical critique of technology and becomes an unexpected example of the power of imagination to relieve pain. What is notable is the medium by which that imagination is realized. Starting out as little more than a high-tech hospital bed, the Z-001 by the film's end is a sentient embodiment of Takazawa's own wish fulfillment. Filled with the memory of his wife, the Z-001 becomes a bio-mechanical bodily projection that diminishes some of the "inanimateness" of the external world, animating the world around it and endowing it with sentience. Takazawa's internal suffering travels through this bodily projection and finds expression and, notably, objectification in the external world. To Scarry, this imaginative work to make "alive" the world around us is not only the antidote to pain but the very function of civilization.[30]

The Z-001 undergoes such a drastic visual and conceptual transformation by the end of the film that the explained presence of a "bio-computer" in its core seems almost a concession that a truly nonsentient form can't quite perform the psychological work needed. Something else, something "not-quite-alive" (i.e., the disembodied voice of Takazawa's wife Haru) is required to bridge the gap. It is at this point that Scarry's object relations and Turkle's object relations collide. Part of what concerns Turkle about relational artifacts is that they do not wait for us to animate them; rather, they are "already animated and ready for relationship."[31] The not-quite-alive in-betweenness of Turkle's relational artifacts challenges Scarry's argument that a fundamental intention of imagination and creation is to make the nonsentient external world around us sentient, relieving us of the "privacy and problems of that sentience."[32] The purity of the external other in Scarry's theory is threatened in a world in which lifelike robotic baby seals exist. In the robot–human therapeutic relationship, a reciprocal exchange of pain may occur, but it is with a

form that has never been more challenging to the distinction between sentience and nonsentience.

At this point we may return once again to Turkle's critical question: "What can something that does not have a life cycle know about your death, or about your pain?" Scarry's "perceived-pain-wished-gone" pathway provides one theoretical possibility. As relational artifacts, therapeutic robots affect us emotionally in a way that challenges the boundary between sentience and nonsentience. Although this disruption to the purity of nonsentience changes the object relations of Scarry's theory of pain and imagination, it is precisely this blurring of boundaries that gives the robot–human therapeutic relationship its painkilling power. Pain is released from the confines of the sentient body and objectified in the robot, a pathway facilitated by the emotional engagement now possible with these increasingly lifelike computational objects.

THERAPEUTIC ROBOTS OFFER A PROMISE OF A FUTURE THAT IS BETTER EQUIPPED TO ADDRESS OUR DEEPLY HUMAN DESIRE: "PERCEIVED-PAIN-WISHED-GONE."

A WORLD WITHOUT PAIN

In *Sayonara,* the Geminoid F android consoles the dying human girl with poems of escape. "I have to go now / I have to go right away" it says, quoting Tanikawa Shuntarō in the play's opening lines. The triumph of imagination over pain that is facilitated in this therapeutic exchange reflects one of the most fundamental human motivations: escape from death and pain. Scarry's theory is interesting for attributing the analgesic imagination to a desire to endow our internal sentience to external, nonsentient objects, while Turkle's concept of relational artifacts adds a twenty-first-century wrinkle to the presumed dichotomy of sentience separating humans from robots. Viewed together, these theories add to our understanding of how a robot could ever know or relieve human suffering.

A confluence of salient trauma in 3/11, the looming demographic crisis of a rapidly aging population, a cultural affinity for robots, and a tradition of ascribing sentience to nonsentient objects positions Japan at the forefront of the new object relations. Robots like Paro will continue to be invented, and it is inevitable that one day a lifelike android reciting poetry to a dying girl will be a reality. Therapeutic robots offer a promise of a future that is better equipped to address our deeply human desire: "perceived-pain-wished-gone." It is, at its heart, a wish to escape to another world. Even in light of this

technological promise, the impossibility of this painless alternate world is beside the point. Technology challenges and will continue to challenge not only our conceptions of sentience and nonsentience, companionship and therapy, but the very wishes that fundamentally motivate us as human beings, disconcertingly sentient in a world that has pain.

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26. Sherry Turkle, "Relational Artifacts/Children/Elders: The Complexities of Cyber-Companions." Paper presented at the 27th Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society, July 2005 in Stresa, Italy. Abstract retrieved from http://www.androidscience.com/proceedings2005/TurkleCogSci2005AS.

27. Ibid., 65.

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29. Stephen Holden, "*Roujin Z* Film Review: A Gadget-Mad America, through Japanese Eyes," *New York Times,* January 5, 1996, http://www.nytimes.com/movie/review?res=9A0CEFDA1239F936A35752C0A960958260.

30. Scarry, *The Body in Pain,* 286.

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Loops of Just Then

FORREST GREENWOOD

The Girl at the End of Time: Temporality, (P)remediation, and Narrative Freedom in *Puella Magi Madoka Magica*

Our world, increasingly, is populated by characters. They gaze out at us from posters, screens, pages, cell-phone straps, upholstery—even from transparent and volumetric "screens" that suggest a complete crossing from their world to ours. How do we, as producers and consumers of these images, navigate this liminal environment? And what considerations do we owe to these characters whose gazes we meet?

In my previous article, "The Girl at the Center of the World," published in *Mechademia 9*, I explored the issue of character agency, noting in particular how characters, through techniques of direct address and the reversed gaze, reach out from the mediated world they inhabit. In the article that follows, and in keeping with this volume's theme of parallel universes and possible worlds, I would like to explore a counterpoint: how characters might resist or redirect the act of viewers/producers reaching from the perceptible world of the here-and-now into the mediated world of the character. Specifically, I do so by considering the proliferation of narratives in the contemporary anime/manga media sphere—of the alternate, fungible futures posited by derivative fan works—and by examining how characters might hold users accountable for the directions these narratives take. In so doing, I will also examine how

the formal characteristics of text-based adventure games ("novel games" or "visual novels," in their Japanese-market permutations) find expression in contemporary anime and manga.

I will situate this analysis by looking at a case study: the twelve-episode TV animation *Puella Magi Madoka Magica* (2011). With episode scripts written by game-industry veteran Urobuchi Gen (who nominally works for developer Nitroplus), it is perhaps no accident that *Madoka Magica* cleverly remediates aspects of game time and player agency within its narrative arc. Drawing on Bolter and Grusin's notion of remediation, I will argue that *Madoka Magica* does not simply repurpose elements from games (in the sense of "pouring a familiar content into another media form,") but instead actively represents formal aspects of novel-game design within its narrative structure—in effect using the fungible futures generated by game time to depict a navigable world of potentiality.[1] In addition, the series goes a step further, by highlighting the *pre*mediation (*pace* Grusin) of character imagery that serves as a defining characteristic of this media sphere, and by suggesting a strategy in which works (and the characters inhabiting them) might address this premediation.

GAME TIME

To begin, I would like to outline the concept of game time, particularly as applied to the genre of adventure games. Writing for the journal *KODIKAS / CODE* in 2001, Anja Rau argues that video games, unlike novels or the cinema, exhibit a broken, discontinuous relationship to time. "In a book or film," Rau writes, "the reader's/viewer's time would correspond directly to the amount of space taken up by the text."[2] In other words, a fairly indexical relationship holds between the amount of text and the length of time it expresses. Certainly, this is true in the case of the cinema, where we generally view films at a constant speed of twenty-four frames per second. The length in footage of a given shot thus gives us a fairly accurate idea of the amount of time represented by that shot.

By contrast, Rau notes that the time elapsed within the diegesis of the game, does not necessarily correlate with the player's experience of time. In non-real-time games, where the game waits for player input before doing anything, the player is free to abandon the game and walk away to do something else—while time stands still from the perspective of the game world.[3] Some games even allow the player to adjust the speed at which the game processes events, giving the player the ability to manipulate time outright. One of the

key features that Rau identifies is the ability of games to reverse or cycle time, whether through saving and loading game states, through player death and restarting, or through design elements that force the player to revisit previous game states in order to advance.[4]

In his 2004 article, "Introduction to Game Time," Jesper Juul codifies a formal system for describing game temporality. Game time, Juul argues, can be divided into two distinct temporalities. *Play time* refers to the passing of time experienced by the player, or, as Juul puts it, "the time the player takes to play."[5] *Event time,* on the other hand, refers to the passing of time as calculated within the game, or "the time taken in the game world."[6]

Clarifying his notion of event time, Juul describes the game environment as a "state machine": for the purposes of event time, an event could be said to occur each time an input function causes an element within the game to change from one state to another.[7] For real-time games, like most first-person shooters, the relationship between play time and event time is direct and linear.[8] The player positions the user interface's crosshair over an opponent and clicks the mouse; the game then scans to see if the crosshair is positioned over an enemy character and, if so, updates the game state to reflect the enemy character as being shot. Meanwhile, as the player moves through the game environment, the game state updates continuously to reflect the player's changed position.

Various circumstances, however, can disconnect play time from event time, or change how one temporality maps onto another. For example, play time continues to pass during a game's loading screen, but after loading is complete, the game reopens in a state immediately following the previous one. A substantial amount of play time has advanced from the player's perspective, but the game's event time has barely changed at all.[9]

Michael Nitsche, writing for the proceedings of the 2007 DiGRA conference, notes that Juul's bifurcated concept of game temporality fails to account for the experiential aspect of time within games. As a corrective, Nitsche proposes an amended concept of game time rooted in concepts of architectural time. Architecture, Nitsche notes, is a time-based medium, in that "it relies on the fragmented reception of parts of a spatial structure that cannot be perceived in its totality by the observer at once."[10] Nitsche explains the significance of this notion of time by referring to the experience of playing a competitive first-person shooter like *Counter-Strike* (1999) or *Quake III Arena* (1999). Part of the challenge of these games, aside from mastering their core shooting mechanics, involves becoming familiar with the architecture and spatial layout of the games' levels. As Nitsche puts it, "an expert can navigate

NOVEL GAMES POSSESS THEIR OWN UNIQUE GEOGRAPHY AND ARCHITECTURE, AND PART OF THE CHALLENGE OF THE GENRE INVOLVES LEARNING HOW TO EFFICIENTLY NAVIGATE THESE STRUCTURES.

the game space much faster than a new player. The player who masters the space gains a spatial and temporal advantage."[11]

Citing the survival-horror game *Siren* (2003), with its "link navigator" that allows the player to see the temporal relationships between game levels, Nitsche further notes that this narrative structure amounts to creating a "time map" that players gradually reveal and explore as they progress through the game's spaces.[12] Nitsche's notion of the time map is prescient, for while *Siren* only allows limited player interaction with the map (it shows how various discrete levels fit into the overarching chronology of the game's narrative), many Japanese text-based adventure games elevate navigation of the time map into a key gameplay concept. Commonly called "visual novels," or "novel games," these games often task players with navigating lengthy text-based narratives, providing opportunities for interaction through binary (or trinary or quaternary) decision points that give the player discrete choices over how to navigate the games' branching narrative structure.[13] Among fan circles, novel games have frequently been compared to choose-your-own-adventure novels, and this characterization, while slightly simplistic, proves accurate enough in practice.

I should note here that not all novel games employ branching narratives. 07th Expansion's *Higurashi no Naku Koro ni* series (2002–6; released in English by MangaGamer as *Higurashi When They Cry*) stands as a phenomenally popular exception in this regard, as the *Higurashi* games are strictly linear in terms of their narrative structures. However, enough novel games do employ branching narratives that this particular narrative structure has come to be emblematic of the genre. Many game critics, particularly within the United States, argue that novel games barely qualify as games at all, in that they allow a narrower scope of interactivity than genres that allow the player to move freely through virtual space.[14] Yet novel games possess their own unique geography and architecture, and part of the challenge of the genre involves learning how to efficiently navigate these structures.

At first glance, it may seem as if reaching the end of any one narrative path constitutes the criterion for success or completion within a novel game. However, such games frequently incorporate a feature, the CG (computer graphics) gallery, designed to encourage multiple replays of and recursions within their branching narratives. While most interactions in novel games involve transparent character sprites overlaid atop static background images,

certain key moments in the narrative are illustrated with special "event CGs," which often employ dramatic perspective effects or showcase a character's personality in a significant way. The CG gallery allows the player to go back and view any event CG that the player has already encountered.

For players of novel games, the CG gallery thus functions as a sort of achievement system; the true goal of playing a novel game is not to reach the end of any one narrative branch but to unlock 100 percent of the available images in the gallery. Playing through each story branch in sequential order would be prohibitive in terms of the player's time, so players often save the game state at key decision points, later using those saves as a series of virtual breadcrumbs to retrace their steps. After the first playthrough, which may well unfold in a more or less linear fashion, the novel game experience can quickly become extremely fragmented, with players using previous saves to freely jump forward and backward in event time.[15] The practice of playing novel games in this manner is evidently widespread enough to appear as an incidental plot point in the fan-culture sitcom *Ore no Imōto ga Konna ni Kawaii Wake ga Nai* (2010, 2013); episode 9 of the first season showcases main character Kōsaka Kirino's gaming habits in detail.[16] While playing an erotic novel game, she takes care to save at decision points, using her saves to explore alternate branches of the narrative, which she carefully documents in her notebook.

This flies in the face of Juul's and Rau's notion of saved games, with Juul treating saves as, at best, a necessary evil allowing players to hone their skills.[17] Rau similarly conceptualizes the save-game system as an iterative "learning process."[18] In this view, the temporal path charted through save games, as Juul puts it, "yield[s] a giant tree with numerous forks (the save games), numerous dead ends, and only one path through."[19] Rather than a teleological progression toward an ultimate narrative end, novel-game play involves free-roaming exploration through the temporal architecture formed by the game's branching narrative structure. Players are free to recurse, jump forward, and otherwise play within the game's chronology.

In this manner, the novel game formally embodies Paul Youngquist's notion of fungibility. Using the practice of futures trading as a metaphor, Youngquist argues that works of speculative science fiction posit visions of the future different from those found in works that "practice the future in the manner of a hedger, along the line of minimum risk and maximum predictability."[20] The futures found in speculative fiction, by contrast, "are recursive loops of variable return."[21] Speculation forms a temporal flow, in which the present informs the future, which returns to inform the present, which then proceeds to inform additional futures. "A fiction that exploits this fungibility,"

writes Youngquist, "would flow too, from now into the future, from the future back to now. It would be the fiction of time travel, a speculative fiction of anticipation and return."[22] Although here Youngquist relates the notions of speculation and fungibility to the thematics of science fiction, this reading applies equally well to the formal ludic structures of novel games.

The novel-game player is a time traveler par excellence, deploying knowledge of potential narrative futures to return to the past and navigate toward alternative futures. Past practice—the player's breadcrumb trail of save games—reflects both speculation about the future and an atemporal knowledge of events to come. Revisiting a save game, the player knows what option *not* to choose but also recognizes that the future opened by one option is equally valid relative to the future opened by another option. The player resides in a hypermediated present, perpetually oscillating between narrative future and narrative past, aware that every juncture represents not a defining plot point on the way to some predictable, teleological terminus but one possibility in a constellation of choices. Play time may proceed in an orderly, straightforwardly chronological manner—the clock on Kirino's wall clicks steadily forward as she navigates the time map of her chosen game—but event time proves wildly discontinuous, fungible in the extreme.

NAVIGATING THE LABYRINTH OF GAME TIME

Fungibility proves to be a defining narrative characteristic of *Puella Magi Madoka Magica,* to the point of serving as a dramatic narrative pivot in the series' concluding episodes. *Madoka Magica,* drawing on the tradition of *mahō shōjo* (magical girl) children's anime, posits a world in which Kyubey, a cuddly mascot-type character of indeterminate species, offers young girls a chance to have one wish granted.[23] In a Faustian bargain (one whose metaphorical appropriateness becomes more evident as the series progresses), the wish comes with a catch: the girls must agree to become magical girls and fight witches, sinister apparitions that terrorize the public. Into this milieu steps main character Kaname Madoka, who admires the ability of magical girls to fight for justice, but who knows neither what she wants to wish for nor how she could possibly be an effective magical girl, as she doesn't believe herself to have any real talents. Kyubey, however, informs Madoka that she has nearly unlimited potential and could become the ultimate magical girl, if only she would make a contract with him—a contract that antagonist character Akemi Homura adamantly opposes.

OVER THE COURSE OF HER JOURNEY, HOMURA CERTAINLY HONES HER SKILLS AT FIGHTING AND AT EXPLOITING HER TIME-CONTROL MAGIC, MUCH AS A GAME PLAYER USES THE REPETITIVE NATURE OF SAVE-GAME PLAY TO GAIN PROFICIENCY IN NAVIGATING THE LEVELS OF A FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER.

The reasons for Homura's obstinacy become clear in episode 10, where we learn her torturous backstory. Homura starts out as an ordinary, if sickly, girl with no magical abilities whatsoever. After being attacked by a witch and saved by the magical-girl duo of Kaname Madoka and Tomoe Mami, Homura becomes fast friends with Madoka, remaining by her side until a climactic battle with Walpurgisnacht, the ultimate witch, during the course of which Madoka loses her life. Overcome with grief, Homura forms a contract with Kyubey, seeking to redo her meeting with Madoka—only this time with Homura protecting Madoka, instead of the other way around. Thus begins a time-traveling odyssey, with Homura desperately trying different strategies to ensure that Madoka survives Walpurgisnacht. Each time, she fails and must reset time to one month prior to Walpurgisnacht—to the day she first met Madoka.

The narrative structure of Homura's character arc would thus initially appear to remediate the save-game mechanisms of video games, as outlined by Juul. Over the course of her journey, Homura certainly hones her skills at fighting and at exploiting her time-control magic, much as a game player uses the repetitive nature of save-game play to gain proficiency in navigating the levels of a first-person shooter, or in formulating tactics for a real-time strategy campaign. Whenever Homura resets time, one potential narrative thread would appear to be canceled out, pruned off as being an incorrect branch on the way to the one true ending.

Nor is game time the only formal element of video games referenced by Urobuchi and the rest of *Madoka Magica*'s creative staff. At one point in her recursive journey, Homura—lacking a magical weapon of her own—stops time to steal firearms and other weapons, first from the local yakuza, then from an American military base, which she stores in her time-manipulating bangle. This could be read as a nod to the "null-time pocket" posited in the time-travel adventure game trilogy *The Journeyman Project* (1992–98), which provides a fictive justification for the adventure-game mechanic of offering the player limitless inventory space. Seemingly limitless in both number and potential size, Homura's stolen armaments supplement her own homemade bombs; she becomes a doe-eyed *jihadi* bent on liberating Madoka from Kyubey's contract. Yet everything comes with a catch, as Urobuchi himself notes in an interview

passage where he compares *Madoka Magica*'s magical-girl contract system to the actions of Al-Qaeda: "Justice for some people is an evil for others. Good intentions, kindness, and hope will not necessarily make people happy."[24]

At the beginning of episode 11, Kyubey pulls back the curtain to reveal just how much damage Homura's good intentions have caused. As Kyubey explains, every temporal reset initiated by Homura, driven by her desire to save Madoka, adds to the weight of Madoka's "karmic destiny," thus fueling Madoka's immense magical-girl potential. Each narrative thread extends into the current timeline, impacting Madoka with equal authority. In her naïveté, Homura assumes that she is playing a conventional real-time game with a save/load function, recursive at the microlevel but teleological at the macrolevel, when in truth she finds herself navigating the temporal architecture of a branching narrative. Revisiting prior events from the series, Homura attempts to choose alternate options at each branching point, with limited success.

Each of Homura's narrative threads end in tragedy, and they all converge at Madoka. In their convergence, these threads uniquely open up space for participatory culture. The *Madoka Magica* television series, bound by the formal limitations of video animation (in that it must posit a linear chronology, without recursion or interactivity) necessarily inserts ellipses into Homura's journey. Fans and producers alike are free to invent their own timelines for the series (indeed, some of the show's official drama CDs take place in alternate timelines), thus hinting at the sort of corporate–grassroots creative convergence identified by Henry Jenkins.[25] Homura struggles to establish narrative primacy in a world where all potentialities are equally valid, including those potentially fashioned by fans, thus echoing Ōtsuka Eiji's notion that in the age of *dōjinshi* and other fan-produced works, distinctions between original works and copies no longer hold any meaning.[26] Yet while Azuma Hiroki sees this process as evidence of a larger breakdown characteristic of postmodernity, ultimately ushering the death of the author, *Madoka Magica* takes a more generous view.[27]

One of the perplexities of animation, particularly of the style of animation common to many anime works, is that it seems to defy what Bolter and Grusin identify as the "mutually dependent" relationship between the logics of immediacy and hypermediacy—between a situation in which "the medium itself should disappear and leave us in the presence of the thing represented" and a situation in which "the artist (or multimedia programmer or web designer) strives to make the viewer acknowledge the medium as a medium and to delight in that acknowledgement."[28] Certainly, there is little that is evidently immediate in the heavily abstracted aesthetic employed by many

anime works; hypermediation appears to reign. But this extends to medialogical issues of form, not simply of content or visual style: one must confront the question of what it is that the medium of video animation, used in this style, represents. Like the photographic cinema, or live-action video, animation creates the illusion of movement through the rapid sequential display of multiple still-image frames or fields. Yet the static frames of the photographic cinema nominally represent temporal slices of some event that once happened during a discrete interval of time. For André Bazin, the "objective" front aperture of the photographic camera performs an embalming function, capturing the photographic subject as "the object itself, the object freed from the conditions of time and space that govern it."[29] Through projection, we can revisit that moment in time forever, in perfect (at least, as Bazin seems to put it) mimesis. By contrast, the static frames of animation represent individual drawings that are, at best, the disparate end points of a lengthy process of labor, assembled by a variety of illustrators working in a number of different locations and, perhaps, according to different orders of prioritization within the production schedule.

As such, the temporality of animation, like the temporality of a non-real-time video game, is profoundly nonindexical. The time of animation, unlike the embalming time of the photographic cinema, does not map neatly onto any established temporality. The shōjo, or the animated character more generally, has no past; a sequence of animated frames or fields does not achieve immediacy, in that it does not leave us in the presence of a sequence of action that occurred as represented. Nor does it even achieve the sense of transparency in which a media work uses both the logics of immediacy and hypermediacy to "[erase] itself, so that the user is no longer aware of confronting a medium, but instead stands in an immediate relationship to the contents of that medium."[30]

In her abstracted artifice, the shōjo leaves the viewer continually aware of her hypermediated existence. She lives in a perpetual present, with each frame or field lacking an indexical, immediate connection to the frame immediately preceding or succeeding it. The heroines in the animated works of Studio Trigger, like the shamelessly vengeful Matoi Ryūko from *Kill la Kill* (2013–14) or the starry-eyed striver Akko from *Little Witch Academia* (2013), delight in their ability to surge from one ebullient pose or expression to the next. Their futures, to borrow Youngquist's language, are not those of the hedger, extrapolated from the preceding frame on a line of maximal predictability, but rather are those of the speculator, spinning off in unpredictable, fungible directions. Other shōjo, like the cast of *Madoka Magica,* explore their

fungible futures in other ways. When they transcend animation to move between media—when they incarnate into Thomas Lamarre's "soulful bodies"—these transitions can be markedly discontinuous.[31]

As a case in point, I would like to turn to a series of digital images that show the main characters of *Madoka Magica* celebrating the dawn of the year 2014 by ringing a temple bell.[32] In these images, the girls—accessorized with horse-themed clothes and trinkets in reference to the year's zodiac sign—all display poses and expressions that convey their essential characters, even under conditions of absolute stillness. Akemi Homura is reserved and slightly unsteady, Tomoe Mami is unflappably elegant, Sayaka Miki is forthright, Kaname Madoka is plain (yet slightly aloof), Sakura Kyōko is enthusiastic and energetic, and newcomer Momoe Nagisa is a harmlessly cute hanger-on. Physiognomy, expression, fashion, and posture combine to reassure us that these are indeed the characters with which we are familiar. Yet a viewer unfamiliar with the show would never guess, based on these images alone, that these characters endure nightmarish tragedies and betrayals in their canonical narrative arcs. Their good cheer speaks to an alternate timeline, one in which Kyubey's dark machinations never transpire.

This phenomenon, this curious narrative displacement, is hardly unique to *Madoka Magica*. Indeed, the decontextualized character image is a staple of anime merchandise, particularly in the male-oriented *bishōjo* (pretty girl) market. What makes *Madoka Magica* unique is that the series actively seems to anticipate, and even embrace, this displacement. In the series' final episode, Madoka awakens to her ultimate magical-girl potential. Assuming the karmic weight of every timeline heaped on her, Madoka ultimately reshapes the world to relieve magical girls of their terrible burden. Becoming something akin to a god, she ascends to become a conceptual being, the savior and guiding light of all magical girls, past, present, and future. Here the series reveals the true import of its remediation of game time: the premediation of girlish possibility.

Coined by Richard Grusin, the term "premediation" refers to a media logic that "works to prevent citizens of the global mediasphere from experiencing again the kind of systemic or traumatic shock" produced by a catastrophic, unexpected disaster or terrorist attack like the plane strikes on New York City's World Trade Center that occurred on September 11, 2001.[33] Premediation, according to Grusin, achieves this prevention through "proliferating multiple remediations of the future," ensuring that no potential future is unmediated at the time of its occurrence.[34] When that future emerges into the world, our prior experience with its premediated representation will insulate us from

potential trauma by giving us a certain degree of aesthetic, mediated distance from it.

While Grusin situates his theory thoroughly in the context of the post-9/11 broadcast- and social-media environment in the United States, the theory itself seems rather more versatile than Grusin's analysis suggests. The ultimate goal of premediation, as Grusin notes, is a media environment that attempts to "map out a multiplicity of possible futures" and, in so doing, "ensure that the future will continue to be connected to or grow out of the present."[35] Significantly, however, premediation does not regard the fungibility of the future through Juul's model of save-game recursion, in which potentiality appears as multiple truncated, incorrect, branches ultimately leading to one true future. Rather, "it is precisely the proliferating of competing and often contradictory future scenarios" that allows premediation to function as it does.[36] Premediation, to an extent, requires a temporal environment in which a variety of futures may transpire, all with roughly equal weight and potentiality.

FAN WORKS INVOLVING SHŌJO CHARACTERS OFTEN FOCUS ON PLACING THOSE CHARACTERS IN NEW NARRATIVE CONTEXTS. EACH NEW NARRATIVE BECOMES A POTENTIAL FUTURE FOR THAT CHARACTER.

In this way, premediation proves useful for analyzing the proliferation of, and preoccupation with, shōjo imagery that percolates through otaku fan culture. Works in the otaku media sphere—both those targeted toward otaku audiences and those produced by otaku as a result of fan practices—work, in essence, to premediate the shōjo, in all her potentiality. Azuma Hiroki argues that mediations of the shōjo simply amount to the creation of a database of affectively enticing design elements, and that otaku fan activity boils down to a mad quest for new elements to add to the database, in new combinations.[37] However, it is important to note the medial context in which these elements circulate: fan works involving shōjo characters often focus on placing those characters in new narrative contexts. Each new narrative becomes a potential future for that character, but often these potential futures carry whiffs of illegitimacy. They are premediations, but not approved ones.

Madoka Magica, however, accounts for the fungibility of these potential futures. Madoka, in ascending to her godlike status, gains awareness of every future that may potentially transpire—every new premediation of what she may eventually become. She knows what Homura has done for her across innumerable narrative timelines and, critically, expresses her approval and gratitude. After all Homura's striving, Madoka grants absolution. Existing at the terminus of all these timelines, the girl at the end of time keeps her attention directed inward, at least for now. One wonders of the consequences

should she, like the girl at the center of the world, turn her attention outward toward the viewer. In premediating the shōjo, otaku often appear to seek assurance that the future—the future of their relationship to the shōjo, reminiscent of the relationship between an owner and a pet—will continue in its current vein. Yet the girl at the end of time, aware of the nature of her premediations, holds the potential to confront and hold accountable those who premediate her image.

Notes

1. Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2000), 68.

2. Anja Rau, "Time in Digital Fiction: Some Temporal Strategies of Adventure Games," in *Kodikas / Code* 24, no. 3–4 (2001): 201.

3. Ibid., 202.

4. Ibid., 203.

5. Jesper Juul, "Introduction to Game Time," in *First Person: New Media as Story, Performance, and Game*, eds. Noah Waldrip-Fruin and Pat Harrigan (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2004), 131.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid., 133.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid., 136.

10. Michael Nitsche, "Mapping Time in Video Games," in *Situated Play* (Tokyo: DiGRA, 2007), 147.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.

13. In this essay, I will use the phrase "novel games," as that is the name favored by Patrick W. Galbraith and Azuma Hiroki, who have written extensively on the genre.

14. See, for example, Lucas M. Thomas, "999: 9 Hours, 9 Persons, 9 Doors Review," *IGN* website, http://www.ign.com/articles/2010/12/17/999-9-hours-9-persons-9-doors-review. As Thomas notes in his review of Chunsoft's 2009 Nintendo DS novel game, the majority of the experience consists of lengthy textual passages in which characters interact with one another as they seek to escape from a mysterious prison. "But," Thomas adds, "in-between those interactions is the actual gameplay of the game—puzzle-solving to escape the traps and obstacles" that the characters encounter during the course of the branching narrative. By referring to these *Myst*-like puzzle-solving sections as the *999*'s "actual gameplay," Thomas implies that the textual passages alone are insufficient to regard *999* as a game.

15. Players, of course, are also free to play the game in a serially linear fashion, exploring each new narrative branch from the very beginning.

16. *Ore no Imōto ga Konna ni Kawaii Wake ga Nai* (My little sister can't be this cute), dir. Kanbe Hiroyuki (2010).

17. Juul, "Introduction," 137–38.

18. Rau, "Time," 203.

19. Juul, "Introduction," 138.

20. Paul Youngquist, *Cyberfiction: After the Future* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 16.

21. Ibid., 17.

22. Ibid.

23. Here I use the transliteration from the subtitle track of the *Madoka Magica* Blu-Ray discs released by Aniplex of America (2012).

24. Egan Loo, "*Madoka Magica* Writer Urobuchi Compares Plot to Al-Qaeda," *Anime News Network* website, http://www.animenewsnetwork.com/interest/2011-08-30/madoka-magica-writer-urobuchi-compares-plot-to-al-qaeda.

25. Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 18.

26. Ōtsuka Eiji, "World and Variation: The Reproduction and Consumption of Narrative," translated by Marc Steinberg, *Mechademia* 5 (2010): 110.

27. Azuma Hiroki, *Otaku: Japan's Database Animals*, translated by Jonathan E. Abel and Shion Kono (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 61–62.

28. Bolter and Grusin, *Remediation*, 6, 41–42.

29. André Bazin, "The Ontology of the Photographic Image," in *Film Theory and Criticism*, 7th ed., eds. Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 162.

30. Bolter and Grusin, *Remediation*, 23–24.

31. Thomas Lamarre, *The Anime Machine: A Media Theory of Animation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 201.

32. Scott Green, "'Madoka Magica' Girls Ring in the New Year," Crunchyroll website, http://www.crunchyroll.com/anime-news/2013/12/28-1/madoka-magica-girls-ring-in-the-new-year.

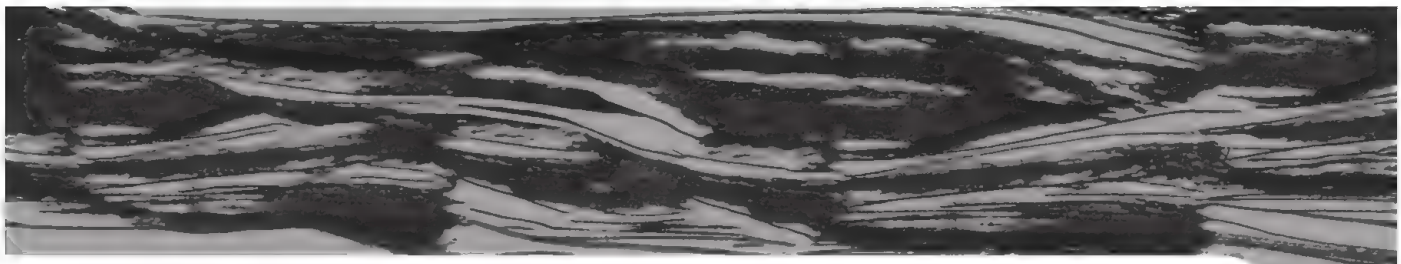
33. Richard Grusin, *Premediation: Affect and Mediality after 9/11* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 2.

34. Ibid., 4.

35. Ibid., 46, 48.

36. Ibid.

37. Azuma, *Otaku*, 88.



PAMELA GOSSIN

Animated Nature: Aesthetics, Ethics, and Empathy in Miyazaki Hayao's Ecophilosophy

Writers, artists, and game-designers often use world building to engage the dilemmas of real life on this planet and offer unique aesthetic perspectives on questions of ecological responsibility, sustainability, nonviolence, and social justice.[1] Master animator and manga artist Miyazaki Hayao is a master world builder. In Miyazaki-world, his *aesthetic* of nature combines and recombines with his *ethic* of nature and human nature to offer us intriguing possibilities for the human imagination of the environment, our relationship to it, and empathetic action within it.[2]

Throughout his long career, Miyazaki has drawn—both literally and figuratively—intricate imagined worlds, at once beautiful and fragile in their complexity. The natural settings of his animation and manga are so effectively realized that a significant portion of his audience, ironically, has had a difficult time seeing the forest for the trees.[3] Focusing on the environmental "message" and ecological themes of some of his early films, many promptly identified Nausicaä as an "eco-warrior princess" and the artist himself as an "environmentalist." Miyazaki adamantly resists such labels and his reasons for doing so are complicated.

While the imagery, characterization, and plot lines of many of Miyazaki's works *are* obviously and directly influenced by his knowledge of nature and ecology, he has learned the hard way how quickly an artist's work can be turned to the purposes of politics and rapidly reduced to a slogan. In the 1980s, the film version of *Nausicaä* "wound up becoming the flagbearer for the ecology movement" in Japan (as one interviewer put it), and since then Miyazaki has seen his audiences' tendency to find simplistic take-away lessons in his films that detract from the greater aesthetic vision he intended to express through those works.[4] Finding himself uncomfortably at the center of such inconvenient and unintended consequences, he now avoids making public statements about his environmental views that might result in being "brand[ed] . . . with the government-approved Eco Mark."[5]

MIYAZAKI'S VIEWS ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT REFLECT A DEEP SYNTHESIS OF HIS ARTISTIC AND AESTHETIC PHILOSOPHY ALONG WITH HIS ETHICAL, SOCIAL, AND POLITICAL VALUES.

Miyazaki's views about the environment reflect a deep synthesis of his artistic and aesthetic philosophy along with his ethical, social, and political values. He and Studio Ghibli cofounder, Takahata Isao, insist that they do *not* consciously set out to make "message" films, eco-friendly or otherwise.[6] To do so would violate their deeply held convictions about the organic nature of the film-making process. A film made with a specific grand theme like "the fate of mankind" or an overt eco-purpose would be, Miyazaki put it, "like a big fat dried-up log, propped upright. What we need [as a scenario for our screenplay] is a living thing, with strong roots, a solid trunk, and branches."[7]

Within Miyazaki's ecological aesthetic, a film comes into being, grows, and changes through a natural process of artistic imagination and evolution.[8] Integrating his personal philosophy and worldview across scales of existence, from the local set of his daily life to the world stage of his films, he has learned to accept a certain organic messiness and to trust the creativity of his unconscious mind (which he describes as existing somewhere in the imaginative space above his head), so that he can experience "[being] *made by* [his] film" (emphasis added), rather than the other way around.[9]

And, there is a deeper message embedded in his metaphor. Art is not only an organic *process* for Miyazaki, it is a *living being,* an organism. He does not impose environmental views or ecological values *upon* his animation. He does not need to; his films are a natural part of who he is, what he thinks, believes, and breathes. Through his conscious and unconscious artistic mind, his efforts take root and grow into sustainable works of art. His resistance

to the political and social connotations of an "environmentalist" label and their negative consequences for his art, then, may stem from the extent to which he embraces and advocates for the ethics and values of an "aesthetic ecophilosopher" instead.

ARTISTIC REPRESENTATION TO NATURE ETHIC

In the United States, verbal descriptions and visual representations of the natural environment during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries directly led to early efforts in conservation and preservation.[10] Such words and images helped establish the environmental movement, and they continue to promote the development of a sustainable nature ethic today. Over the course of his career, renowned nature advocate and environmental scholar Roderick Frazier Nash has directly drawn upon this literary and artistic heritage to formulate a complex philosophy of nature. In his widely influential essay "Why Wilderness?" he offers a clear and effective articulation of a nature ethic that recognizes and incorporates a nature aesthetic as well.[11]

Openly declaring that "Wilderness is indeed an endangered geographical species," Nash proposes seven foundational values on which an effective defense of nature can be built: (1) its *scientific value*; (2) *spiritual value*; (3) *aesthetic value*; (4) *heritage value*; (5) *psychological value*; (6) *cultural value*; and finally, (7) "the last and least anthropocentric wilderness benefit," the *intrinsic value* of wild ecosystems and the nonhuman life within them, their right to exist apart from any other values that humanity may derive from them.[12] By enacting these values and setting aside natural spaces to be preserved from development, Nash believes, human beings can make "a gesture of planetary modesty," as "members, not masters, of the community of life" and respectfully recognize that "Wilderness is the best place to learn humility, dependency and reverence for all life."[13]

Nash writes with a deep awareness that his nature ethic can be read as "subversive" of modern civilization's cultural norms, attitudes, and beliefs about wilderness, namely "materialism, utilitarianism, growth, domination, hierarchy, exploitation."[14] Convinced that development and "the preservation of wilderness are *not* compatible," he has long been aware that the process of translating the words of his proposed ethic into real-world action will be hard, contested and slow. Retelling a favorite story of John F. Kennedy in which an ancient Chinese monarch who was planning an orchard learned that one variety of tree would not bear fruit for one hundred years, Nash's

conclusion echoes the "wise monarch['s]" response: "In that case, let us plant it this morning!"[15]

Through his life and his work, Miyazaki Hayao has planted many such seeds.

MIYAZAKI'S AESTHETIC NATURE ETHIC

Like Nash, Miyazaki is well aware of his cultural heritage in natural depiction and description. He expresses a deep appreciation for the sweeping landscapes and detailed scenes of village life found in medieval Japanese scrolls, folding screens, and *ukiyo-e*–style woodblock prints.[16] He is equally aware that Japanese environmental history has paralleled that of Western Europe and North America. Within the course of his own lifetime, rapid modernization in Japan has pushed nature to the limit. As he learned through his own reading on the subject, especially Clive Ponting's *A Green History of the World,* the pattern of human cultures inhabiting a geographical area new to them, developing technologically through the exploitation of that ecosystem's natural resources, and then ultimately exhausting the very environment that sustained their lives and their social development, is a sad and all-too-recurrent motif throughout earth's history.[17]

Ponting's introductory chapter "The Lessons of Easter Island" offers an explicit object lesson for Japan as an island nation, but more deeply, draws a poignant extended metaphor for the consequences of human habitation upon this "pale blue dot" that is our planet. No man may be an island, but every one of us—essentially—lives on one. Equally crucial to the moral of Ponting's eco-historical story is the fact that no easy nostalgic return to some simpler agrarian past will relieve the crises that our industrial depletion of the environment has caused. Ironically, it was the very development of agriculture itself and the subsequent establishment of stable (as opposed to mobile) human societies increasingly dependent upon it that cultivated the slippery slope of environmental degradation upon which we now find ourselves. In Ponting's view, seeing that cause–effect relationship and recognizing its irreversibility may be a vital first step toward finding a sustainable balance of human needs and natural resources.[18]

Miyazaki's environmental philosophy draws upon his culture's aesthetic representations of and historical interactions with the natural world, and it resonates strongly with all seven values of Nash's wilderness ethic. First, Miyazaki's works and words acknowledge the value of scientific investigation

of the natural world.[19] His appreciation for the beauty of human curiosity about natural things is easily seen in his depiction of Nausicaä's exploration of the toxic forest (Sea of Decay) and her compassionate attempts to study its plants and their soil so that she can understand them and perhaps develop a cure for their poisonous effects on humans, including her own father.[20] He is also aware that nature studies have the potential to improve our understanding of biological realities, such as the deep interconnectedness of all living things to the environment and the necessity of maintaining biodiversity. For example, his own study of Nakao Sasuke's "broadleaf evergreen forest culture" concept and the history of Japanese agriculture, especially the problematic cultivation of rice, has reinforced his views that old-growth forests and undeveloped ecosystems must be preserved.

FOR MIYAZAKI, NATURE'S SPIRITUAL AND "HERITAGE" VALUES OFTEN INTERTWINE, ESPECIALLY IN PLACES WHERE FEELINGS OF VENERATION AND "DARK AWE" ARE PALPABLY REAL, SUCH AS IN THE DEEP WOODS.

Also in accord with key aspects of Nash's philosophy (values 2–6), Miyazaki expresses a deep integration of and respect for the aesthetic and spiritual value of natural things and natural places, their psychologically restorative value, as well as their inspiration of human creative arts, culture and history. Having personally experienced the beauty and calming effect of zelkova trees, he regards trees and plants as the best artistic symbols of the complex and interconnected natural world we live in and often uses such imagery in his animation. The giant camphor tree in *Our Neighbor Totoro,* for example, was inspired, in part, by the protective, sheltering quality and quiet presence and strength—almost wisdom—that we so often psychologically associate with large individual tree specimens (Figure 1). Moreover, he drew it to provide "the tree's perspective" within the film's storyline.[21] Similarly, in the "dream" of Mei and Satsuki where the seeds grow into trees overnight, the imagery of that night scene represents the slow growth and renewal of large-scale natural cycles contracted and shrunk down to "child-sized" human time so that they can feel comforted and reassured by them.

For Miyazaki, nature's spiritual and "heritage" values often intertwine, especially in places where feelings of veneration and "dark awe" are palpably real, such as in the deep woods.[22] In *Princess Mononoke,* he creates this sense of the numinous for both Ashitaka and the audience as they together enter the Shishigami's forest and walk among the *kodama,* the first deeply quiet and peaceful scene in what up until then has been a loud and violent film (Figure 2). The moment effectively distinguishes between those characters (and

viewers) whose spirits are open to the natural divinity of the place and those who superstitiously fear it.

Culturally and historically, Miyazaki is also sensitive to the fact that important aspects of the Japanese peoples' ethnic past and identity are intimately tied to a sense of sacred natural places ("cultural climate"), such as the "primeval forest of Hokkaido's Shiretoko peninsula" and the extended forest regions of southern China and East Asia as described by Nakao.[23] In

FIGURE 1. *My Neighbor Totoro*. DVD. Directed by Miyazaki Hayao. 1988, Burbank, Calif.: Buena Vista Home Entertainment, Inc., 2006.

FIGURE 2. *Princess Mononoke*. DVD. Directed by Miyazaki Hayao. 1997, Burbank, Calif.: Buena Vista Home Entertainment, Inc., 2000.

his animation, Miyazaki often expresses the significance of this natural, geographical sense of place through a nostalgic evocation of historical crossroads, such as the opening sequence of *Castle in the Sky* and the linear tapestry at the beginning of *Nausicaä* that depicts scenes illustrating recurrent cycles of technological development and failure that have already taken place throughout human existence (Figure 3). Such visual representations remind viewers about the inescapable convergence of human events and actions that have led to a particular moment of crisis in which the intertwined fates of humanity and nature are held in precarious balance. We have loved and been nurtured by such places before, but our natural ingenuity and undisciplined growth destroyed them. Maybe in this peaceful valley, or up on this alpine meadow—maybe, this time we can figure out a way to preserve ourselves and sustain respect for the natural place around us.

Here, however, Miyazaki's aesthetic ecophilosophy parts company with that of Nash, whose view of the intrinsic value of wilderness emphasizes a more-or-less egalitarian stance, with the mutual right to exist shared by humanity, other life forms, and the natural world. Miyazaki's view goes further, verging on an unabashedly anti-anthropocentric attitude. Sometimes, individual people can be good and beautiful, collectively human beings can be generous and kind. At other times, however, it seems the natural world might be better off without them. For Miyazaki, a proper valuation of human life seems to involve accurately seeing and assessing humanity's existence in the full light of its consequences, our eyes unclouded by the bias of speciesism.

FIGURE 3. Tapestry scroll from *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* (*Kaze no tani no Naushika*), DVD. Directed by Miyazaki Hayao. 1984, Burbank, Calif.: Buena Vista Home Entertainment, Inc., 2005.

As he describes his own epiphany moment: "One weekend morning I was wandering around alone in Sakujii Park when no one was there. I was walking in the park at that hour because no one was at the Toei Animation studio that early . . . I thought the trees were so beautiful. I also realized that Japan is beautiful when there are no people around. [*laughs*] Japan became ugly because its population grew . . . That was when I understood."[24]

On occasion, Miyazaki's frustration with human folly has led him to express a cynical longing for a "post–human technology" world in which the "developers go bankrupt, Japan gets poorer" and nature dominates the planet. In a 2005 interview, Margaret Talbot perfectly captured his conflicted attitude toward human life, with all its contradictions and enthusiasms—hopefully nihilistic, unselfconsciously self-destructive, intellectually curious, and still weirdly eager that real external crises might precipitate real inner change:

> "Our population could suddenly dip and disappear!" he said, flourishing his cigarette in the air. "I talked to an expert on this recently, and I said, 'Tell me the truth.' He said with mass consumption continuing as it is we will have less than fifty years. Then it will all be like Venice. I think maybe less, more like forty. I'm hoping I'll live another thirty years. I want to see the sea rise over Tokyo and the NTV tower become an island. I'd like to see Manhattan underwater. I'd like to see when the human population plummets and there are no more high-rises, because nobody's buying them. I'm excited about that. Money and desire—all that is going to collapse, and wild green grasses are going to take over.[25]

TOWARD AN ETHICS OF EMPATHY: MIYAZAKI'S "ANIMATED" NATURE

Nash's wilderness ethic leads into or gestures toward deep ecology, traditionally defined as a philosophy concerned with questioning the root causes of ecological crisis beyond their immediate human contexts. Miyazaki's aesthetic ecophilosophy begins there and goes deeper, as both the artistic and metaphoric expression of his animation encourage profound appreciation of complex concerns about the interrelatedness and interdependence of natural systems, both living and nonliving.[26] His films teach us that to create humane, ethical action within the natural realm, humankind must: (a) accept our own limitations as organisms (as individuals, families, nations, and species); (b) learn to more clearly see nature as in itself it really is (to whatever

extent that may be possible); (c) better understand the roles of relativity and contingency in all existence, as well as in our own perceptions of and predictions about the physical world; and (d) acknowledge the value of the unknown and unknowable as real and active variables in the vast cosmological, ecological, and existential equations in which we find ourselves, including an allowance of the possibility that what we do not and cannot know may be *more significant* than the sum total of everything we think we can and do consciously know. Miyazaki integrates these deeper abstractions within the very metaphoric imagery and structure of his animation.[27]

FOR MIYAZAKI, AN EMPATHETIC AND ETHICAL ECOLOGY BEGINS AT HOME, IN THE MOST LOCAL OF ENVIRONMENTS: ONE'S OWN HEART AND MIND.

For Miyazaki, an empathetic and ethical ecology begins at home, in the most local of environments: one's own heart and mind. As the creator-god of his animation, he takes his aesthetic and ethical responsibilities toward his creation seriously. He enjoys "building a truly unique imaginary world, tossing in characters [he likes], and then creating a complete drama using them."[28] He also recognizes that animation is an "explicitly affective art" that "causes emotional responses," so he prefers to use this power positively "to express in an honest way that what is good is good, what is pretty is pretty, and what is beautiful is beautiful."[29] He wants the settings of his imagined places to be as "realized" as possible so that his animation may "[express] the very act of living."[30] He holds himself accountable to strong ethical standards for using humor and technological imagery (so prevalent in mass-produced anime) in thoughtful and life-promoting ways.[31] Fully admitting his own inner unresolved paradox of cynicism and idealism, he "[yearns] desperately to affirm the world rather than negate it" and seeks, through his animation, "to send a message of cheer to all those wandering aimlessly through life."[32]

Miyazaki is also aware that multiple levels of contradiction coexist within the broader surrounding environments of his art, profession, studio life, and the animation industry at large.[33] He is aware that the dual nature of art itself offers its audience both a loss and a gain in the "vicariousness" of the experience it expresses and encapsulates.[34] He is aware that no matter how earnestly he wants and intends to encourage and "teach children to appreciate the beauty of the world" that his best artistic efforts to do so ironically require them to sit still in a dark theater and "steal time from them that otherwise might be spent in a world where they go out and make their own discoveries or have their own experiences."[35] As caretaker of his human garden of employees, he worries about coworkers, staff, and their families, and works

hard to create a fair, ethical, healthy, ergonomically efficient, socially and aesthetically pleasing, as well as eco-friendly work environment for them, while equally aware that in order to produce the imagined worlds of his animation, he must encroach upon their real lives with long work hours and high-pressure production schedules. As much as he admires the beauty of human willpower and effort—the simple heroism of living creatures working to their full potential—he realizes that there is nothing particularly lovely about his own autocratic exploitation of the masses.[36]

In both his art and life, Miyazaki recognizes the strange and ubiquitous truth that even when we feel that we are giving our best efforts and are realizing our intended aims most successfully, we may also simultaneously be failing and harming others. Since we all unavoidably "cast our shadows onto each other," each generation has a responsibility to try to negate its own bad acts and transmit something positive to the next.[37] The painful realization that he has failed to do this with his own sons inspires him to work that much harder to create animation that will encourage others' children and teach them "how to appreciate the beauty of the world," "[offering them] a sense of liberation," "some meaning," some "core principles . . . about what is important and what is wrong with the world that we currently live in," and, most vitally, give his audience a sense that "this is what it means to be alive."[38]

In expressing his world view and its ethical life principles in his animation, Miyazaki seeks to avoid didactic preaching or overt storytelling (which would go over "like a lead balloon"), trusting rather the "secret power of a single image."[39] As he describes the effect, "In a truly powerful film, in any string of shots you will see several that can stand alone as the representative 'face' of the entire work. They may come at the end, or seemingly appear out of nowhere in a bridge sequence. But they will burn themselves into the consciousness of the viewer and in the viewer's memory eventually grow to symbolize the whole film."[40] Miyazaki's deeper insights on human life and nature are often contained in such images.[41] They may appear in an isolated sequence, as the closing scene, or "out of nowhere," hanging like Milton's "pendant world," emblematically suspended in animated space, silently signifying.

In each of his films, there are multiple iconic scenes where Miyazaki offers lessons about human nature, crossing a full range of human emotion, comic to profound. To illustrate the *reductio ad absurdum* limitations of human rivalry and jealously, for instance, he creates the knock-down, drag-out fist-fighting scene in *Porco Rosso,* piling on the blows, one exaggerated and exhausting image at a time, until the audience feels as ridiculous and defeated for *watching* the violence as the characters feel for engaging in it. Why *do* we fight

FIGURE 4. Fight scene, from *Porco Russo*, DVD. Directed by Miyazaki Hayao. 1992, Burbank, Calif.: Buena Vista Home Entertainment, Inc., 2005.

(Figure 4)? Similarly, when Nausicaä has killed the men who murdered her bedridden father, drops her sword and collapses, or when Howl's "war bird" body lies in a battered heap of tattered feathers before Sophie, these images of spent fighters offer the realization that even apparently justifiable violence exacts a deep toll on our human life force (Figure 5). Sadly, we have a difficult time controlling ourselves—our defensive and destructive energies as well as our creative ones.

In another illustration of this point, Miyazaki poignantly juxtaposes images of human technology that represent useful inventiveness, low environmental impact, and self-disciplined constraint (quiet windmills, flowing canals, the bird-like mehve, gentle giant gardener-robots) with others that highlight the dangerously driven and wild metastasis of military might (cobbled-together warplanes, clumsy tanks, and overwrought battleships) (Figure 6). In still another, he uses such imagery to create what Western pedagogical theorists call a "teachable moment." In *Nausicaä,* he depicts one of the elders from the Valley of the Wind holding out his work-worn and toxin-damaged hands, turning them gently side to side, recounting how "his" princess loves them just as they are. The quiet imagery of this moment implies much larger social, political, and cultural differences between the Valley folk and Kushana's people and simultaneously indicates that such differences are choices that could be unchosen. The elder's simple gesture and story together project a powerful parable: all humans could learn to look at so many things differently—including human difference itself. Just look at these hands (Figure 7).

FIGURE 5. Nausicaä dropping the sword, and Howl collapsing. *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* (*Kaze no tani no Naushika*), DVD. Directed by Miyazaki Hayao. 1984, Burbank, Calif.: Buena Vista Home Entertainment, Inc., 2005. *Howl's Moving Castle* (*Hauru no ugoku shiro*), DVD. Directed by Miyazaki Hayao. 2004, Burbank, Calif.: Buena Vista Home Entertainment, Inc., 2006.

Miyazaki is also a master of the gestalt shift. In the flash of a single image, he causes viewers to see in a new way or "get" some essential truths that they never realized before, such as the fact that we are *of* nature, not just *in* it, and our limited experiences and perceptions may be distorting our understanding of nature and our interactions with it. For example, as Nausicaä rushes to help someone, her quick physical wince and even quicker "excuse me" to the insect she accidentally steps on never fails to evoke a delighted and enlightened "ah ha" from the audience (Figure 8). This girl has a deep regard for all living

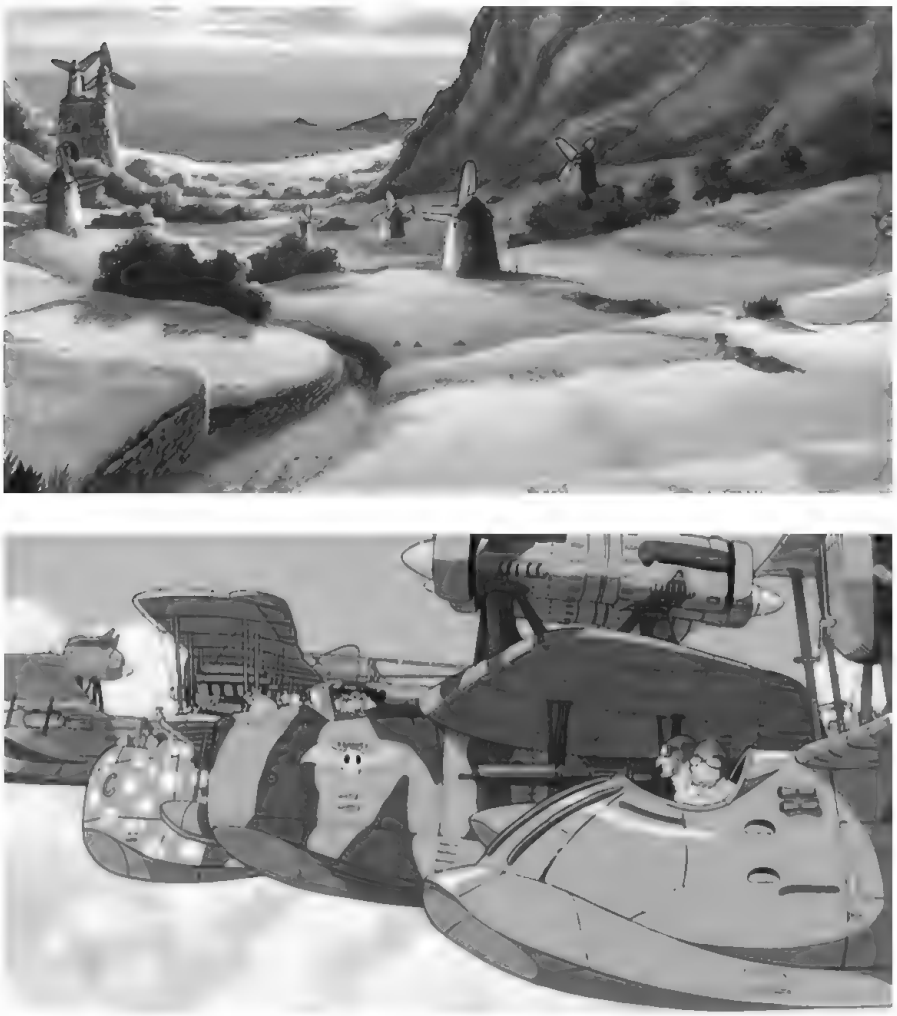


FIGURE 6. Valley of windmills and a cobbled-together plane, from *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* (*Kaze no tani no Naushika*), DVD. Directed by Miyazaki Hayao. 1984, Burbank, Calif.: Buena Vista Home Entertainment, Inc., 2005, and *Porco Rosso*, DVD. Directed by Miyazaki Hayao. 1992, Burbank, Calif.: Buena Vista Home Entertainment, Inc., 2005.

things, so of course, even in times of emergency, she tempers her behavior accordingly. How easy and natural she makes that seem! That was the same instinct we acted upon as kids—would it really be so hard for us now to do the same?

The gentle intricacy of such scenes reminds us that, as a master filmmaker, Miyazaki is also functioning as a master teacher, creating visual exercises that have the potential to retrain our eyes to notice the value of small, otherwise overlooked natural phenomena and freshly appreciate the beauty

FIGURE 7. *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* (*Kaze no tani no Naushika*), DVD. Directed by Miyazaki Hayao. 1984, Burbank, Calif.: Buena Vista Home Entertainment, Inc., 2005.

FIGURE 8. *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* (*Kaze no tani no Naushika*), DVD. Directed by Miyazaki Hayao. 1984, Burbank, Calif.: Buena Vista Home Entertainment, Inc., 2005.

of the "everyday" mundane pleasures available to sentient beings alive in and alive to the world. Most often, like the totoro leaving acorns for Mei and Satsuki (Figure 9), he just lays these images in the visual field for us to notice or not, take up their meaning or not: lichens growing upon a stone path, the shimmer of minnows in a polluted stream, the sun angling across an early summer's day, a green frog swimming away, clouds building behind power lines, the slow progress of a raindrop from leaf-tip to umbrella top. Whatever proximate crisis we may feel ourselves caught up within, such images are

FIGURE 9. *My Neighbor Totoro*. DVD. Directed by Miyazaki Hayao. 1988, Burbank, Calif.: Buena Vista Home Entertainment, Inc., 2006.

available to remind us of the larger natural spaces and deeper natural forces that also always surround us and provide another perspective and contextual scale for the intensity and significance of our human dramas.

At other times, Miyazaki has a character more explicitly show us how to rework our anthropocentric calculus to seek new ways of seeing and being. In both the film and the manga of *Nausicaä* are key moments where the princess "reads" the complexity of the narrative's central crisis in ways that differ significantly from that of the other main characters. Her assessment does not just weigh and compare the pressing social and political concerns of the various human factions involved, she empathetically includes the well-being of the world of insects and natural processes themselves as equally important and relevant variables. Her way of doing the math (adding + c, where c = some universal constant) makes all the difference. In a single iconic image, Miyazaki depicts her unique ability to see humankind as a small part of a much larger complex whole: he draws his usually active natural investigator supine—quite still—pondering the various components of the problem in a meditative state between consciousness and unconsciousness, at peace with the natural space she occupies and, literally, looking at the spore-fall of the toxic forest through an ohmu's lens (Figure 10).

To see nature more purely, we humans must unlearn some of our attitudes and beliefs, including our tendency to polarize "nature versus culture" and valorize culture as somehow superior to it. We are always already "nature" as well as "culture" as the audience is quickly reminded in *Princess Mononoke* when San turns, with her blood-stained mouth, toward Ashitaka, "nature

FIGURE 10. *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* (*Kaze no tani no Naushika*), DVD. Directed by Miyazaki Hayao. 1984, Burbank, Calif.: Buena Vista Home Entertainment, Inc., 2005.

red in tooth and claw" (Figure 11). And, lest we fall into the opposite trap of anthropomorphizing, overacculturating, or "Disney-fying" the animal souls of her protective and apparently altruistic wolf-siblings, Miyazaki lets them growl their thoughts out loud: "can we eat him?" Seeing nature as it is, not as we need it or want it to be, also means demythologizing it as a benevolent "mother" and accepting its lack of teleology.[42] Changing our misperceptions of nature may aid us in changing our behavior so that we can "show civility not only to other living things but also . . . to the water, the mountains, and the air."[43]

In viewing Miyazaki's animated nature, his audiences are constantly offered opportunities to perceive the nature of things from a relativistic and humble perspective, fully considering the roles of contingency and unpredictability in the universe. Humans are smart and clever, creative and adaptive, but our big brains are also subject to prejudice, bias, blind spots, and obstinacy. Playing to the strengths of our better cognitive angels, we can exercise our powers of observation and our imaginations to more effectively understand natural phenomena. Explaining that all kinds of questions about natural things must be pondered before he can successfully animate them, he asked a group of sixth graders (who, presumably, were not too far gone for saving) to consider how a mouse and an elephant and the earth's mantle would experience the speed and time of their own motions, what rain would look like to a honey bee, what shape raindrops really have, how birds read the wind.[44] Critics of SETI projects (the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence) have in fact suggested a similar test for human readiness for such

FIGURE 11. *Princess Mononoke*. DVD. Directed by Miyazaki Hayao. 1997, Burbank, Calif.: Buena Vista Home Entertainment, Inc., 2000.

CHANGING OUR MISPERCEPTIONS OF NATURE MAY AID US IN CHANGING OUR BEHAVIOR SO THAT WE CAN "SHOW CIVILITY NOT ONLY TO OTHER LIVING THINGS BUT ALSO ... TO THE WATER, THE MOUNTAINS, AND THE AIR."

an encounter. If we cannot learn to respect, appreciate, and peacefully coexist with the "alien" creatures with whom we already share this planet—whether bees or bacteria—how can we presume to be sophisticated enough to meet and greet life-forms that originate elsewhere? In *Nausicaä*, Miyazaki reminds us of such concerns with the closing zen garden–like image of the film in which we see, near her fallen gas mask, a single green shoot pushing up through the sandy floor of the toxic forest (Figure 12). Whatever temporary fixes humankind may achieve in the "upper" world, at a deeper level other natural forces are at work, with their own reasons and their own ways.

Through the emblematic imagery of his animation, Miyazaki also calls into question humanity's hubristic belief in its ability to assess cause and effect and accurately predict consequences. Since all of us always must make choices and decisions based on incomplete, imperfect knowledge of initial conditions and their fallout, there is no excuse for taking the humility of that constraint for granted and dismissing it. If every action, human or natural, generates a cascade of reactions—a butterfly effect—why do we persist in so impulsively initiating actions for which we can only perceive short-term gains? If we *know* we are ignorant, why aren't we more cautious? Shouldn't we at least *try* to flutter our wings more gently?

FIGURE 12. *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* (*Kaze no tani no Naushika*), DVD. Directed by Miyazaki Hayao. 1984, Burbank, Calif.: Buena Vista Home Entertainment, Inc., 2005.

Over the course of his life's work, Miyazaki has seriously engaged this issue. Doing so in the storyline of the *Nausicaä* manga caused him considerable philosophical and psychological anguish, forcing himself to "write what he did not know" (i.e., the meaning of life). The insoluble problem of contingency lies at the heart of the captivating structural metaphor of *Ponyo on the Cliff [by the Sea]*: in a little fish's simple wish to be other than she is resides the whole impetus for all the art, all the science, all the magic, and all the technology in the world. We want; therefore we create, we discover, we conjure and pray, we invent and build. With a mere flip of her wishful fin Ponyo wills herself to live "out of her natural element" and sets off an immense flood of consequences across all scales of existence, threatening the well-being of her relationship to her genetic family, other creatures she loves, the sea, the planet, and evolutionary processes themselves (Figure 13). Ah. Maybe what we do not know *can* hurt us. Perhaps we should devote more of our considerable ingenuity toward developing ways to discipline and constrain our individual and collective will and learn to ameliorate the collateral damage that even our most innocently creative forces can generate. In *The Wind Rises,* one artist's imagination of a beautiful object that creatively unites human desire and natural forces is in the same inspirational breath adapted to another's will for destruction (Figure 14). Metaphoric lessons like this run deep, "burn[ing] themselves into the consciousness," with real potential to affect how young viewers see themselves in relation to the natural world and each other. The more superficial layers of Miyazaki's films are for grown-ups!

The aesthetic eco-philosophy and deeper imagery of Miyazaki's animation

FIGURE 13. *Ponyo*, DVD. Directed by Miyazaki Hayao. 2008, Burbank, Calif.: Buena Vista Home Entertainment, Inc., 2010.

consistently remind us that human drama is not the measure of the universe. The power of his visual metaphors function like the "magic eye" effect of 3-D images hidden within two-dimensional stereograms: by consciously blurring our focus from the superficial shapes and pixels on the screen, *we can see through them* to a deeper level of representation and meaning. In his "animated" nature, Miyazaki celebrates and respects the miracle of life. He is an equal-opportunity life admirer, believing that all forms of life deserve equally to enjoy their existence free of human bias, whether midges or sweet-fish, wild boars or wildflowers, worm-handlers or their worms.[45] Even we humans deserve to be liberated from the confines of our own attitudes and beliefs and the hidden influence of our unconscious minds, as he tenderly shows us in Sophie's struggle to work her way through her self-fulfilling "curse" or Kiki's challenge to grow into her own natural abilities.

Knowing that at times in his animation Miyazaki has tried (and failed) to "[ponder] too many imponderables," he fully acknowledges the ineffability of defining what "life" is and the inadequacy of human explanations of its mysterious power.[46] For Miyazaki, the idea of "anima"—the essence or "soul" of living beings—seems to properly apply to everything that has *being*, as existence in the universe is itself a special—even spiritual—state. That anything *is* at all should cause us—second-by-second, sensation-by-sensation—constant amazement, and humility. In his aesthetic eco-philosophy and animation, he extends his sense of admiration and honor beyond the realm of human life and nonhuman life to the equal miracle of being itself: nonliving entities and objects, abstract processes and even the unknown and unknowable. In

FIGURE 14. "*The Wind Rises* Trailer | Festival 2013," YouTube video, 4:16, posted by the Toronto International Film Festival, August 14, 2013.

Miyazaki's "animated" nature, everything that is, is holy and is equally deserving of ethical treatment ("civility").[47]

As Miyazaki's creative use of "deeper" imagery shows, ethical action can be inspired by many kinds of empathy.[48] Following Nausicaä's example may help us develop compassion and understanding, but to stop there would be to take her model of human–nature interaction too literally. Miyazaki intends for his animation not only to make things move, to move us emotionally to act ethically, but also to transform us *spiritually*.[49] He expressly created Nausicaä's investigation and discovery of the true nature of the toxic forest in order to "trigger a Copernican-like revolution of understanding" and to bring the story to a logical resolution.[50] Like all such paradigm shifts, however,

FIGURE 15. "In Castle in the Sky," in the aftermath of violent destruction. The rise of nature and the fall of technology, from *Laputa: Castle in the Sky*, DVD. Directed by Miyazaki Hayao. 1986, Burbank, Calif.: Buena Vista Home Entertainment, Inc., 2003.

the resolution of crisis also represents the first stage of the investigation of a whole new set of problems. In the manga, Miyazaki shows Nausicaä engaging this deeper reality as she devotes herself and her very being to the purpose of learning whether nature has a "true" nature and to the problem of choosing a path of ethical action within an existential landscape born of a complex mix of natural contingency and human artificiality. The process of fully engaging the complexity, contradictions, and contingency inherent in this dilemma transforms her into a fully spiritual human being. And the dilemma she faced is still ours.

At the end of Nausicaä's stories—as at the resolution of any crisis, in animation, nature, or life—Miyazaki's deeper imagery reveals that we stand "at the starting point of an incomprehensible world" and "there can be no happy ending . . . [although] there are things worthy of life."[51] In *Princess Mononoke,* boy does not get girl, nature and culture are not wed in harmony, although both do go on, for better or worse. In *Castle in the Sky,* in the aftermath of violent destruction, the island of Laputa floats away, nature resettling itself and quietly reclaiming with its deep roots the minerals of the fallen stones of human culture (Figure 15). It is Easter Island all over again, or Pandora.[52] Large-scale cycles like these may seem insoluble and we can never know whether our efforts result in positive or negative consequences, but to fully honor life we must try, and we must try to enjoy trying. Indeed, as Miyazaki has said, "hope [itself] involves working and struggling along with people who are important to you. In fact, I've gotten to the point where I think this

is what it means to be alive," so "let's be patient and endure, let's try to live together."[53] As he more recently put it, "The wind rises. We must try to live." Use the wind to take a breath, take inspiration, lift off. When we feel overwhelmed by the vastness and insolubility of global problems, a simple change of perspective may show us the way toward effective, local action: "If [we] get closer to the ground, [we] may see a path to solve them that proceeds fifty meters or so. It may look like an appealing road, and if the weather's good and the sun's out [we] may feel energized and able to / make it down the road."[54] And . . . where have we seen *that* image before? Ah. Mei can show us the way.

Notes

Thanks to Marc Hairston for comments and suggestions.

1. Nature writers as diverse as Henry David Thoreau, John Muir, Aldo Leopold, Rachel Carson, Roderick Frazier Nash, Annie Dillard, Michel Serres, Michael Pollan, and Ursula K. Le Guin have all contributed to this effort. Organizations like the Artists for Conservation Foundation (AFC) and the Environmental and Sustainable Art movements engage similar concerns through visual and performing arts, sculpting, music, and dance; see especially artists such as Rosalie Gascoigne, Andy Goldsworthy, Patrice Stellest, and Joseph Beuys, with his famous *7000 Oaks* project. See also Mark J. P. Wolf, *Building Imaginary Worlds: The Theory and History of Subcreation* (New York: Routledge, 2012), and Jane McGonigal, *Reality Is Broken: Why Games Make Us Better and How They Can Change the World* (New York: Penguin, 2011).

2. My sense of "Miyazaki-world" emphasizes its world-building elements and processes—the transformation of an inner world to outer worlds—from the individual's aesthetic principles and artistic vision and personal development of an ethic and philosophy of life to artistic expression and real-world action. This usage differs from that of noted Japanese studies and anime scholar Susan J. Napier, who coined the term "MiyazakiWorld" to emphasize the relationship between Miyazaki's fans and his works and the shared imagined space within his creative end products; see her "In Search of Sacred Space? Anime Fandom and MiyazakiWorld," in *From Impressionism to Anime: Japan as Fantasy and Fan Cult in the Mind of the West,* 191–204 (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

3. In keeping with Miyazaki's personal preference, throughout this essay I will use the word "animation" to refer to his films and film-craft instead of the term "anime," as he associates the latter with the hyped "overexpressionism" of mass-produced and mass-marketed television series and films rather than the more serious pursuit of animation as an art form and aesthetic mode of expression. Also, I must give full credit to my former doctoral student, Shari Childers, for the nice eco-play on words here, as she used the forest/trees reference with a similar ironic emphasis in her dissertation, *Renegade and Relevant: American Women's Visions and Voices in Ecocritical Theory and Pedagogical Practice* (University of Texas, Dallas, 2008). Order No. DA3340470.

4. Miyazaki Hayao, interview, "On Completing *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*: The

Story Continues," in *Starting Point: 1979–1996*, trans. Beth Cary and Frederik L. Schodt (San Francisco: VIZ Media, 1996), 391. Cited hereafter as *Starting Point*. In his private life away from Studio Ghibli, Miyazaki has also found that such labels complicate his attempts to personally embody and enact the values of an ecological "good neighbor," as they have the potential to commercialize and cheapen his direct involvement in local projects such as river clean-up and reforestation. See, for instance, his remarks about his involvement in the Totoro Forest Project (ibid., 402).

5. Ibid., 405.

6. "Nothing could be further from the truth" (ibid., 106).

7. Ibid.

8. He created the *Nausicaä* manga without any clear idea of how it was going to develop and, similarly, filmed the beginning of *Spirited Away* while still working on the storyboard for the rest.

9. Miyazaki, *Starting Point*, 111.

10. Although many of these accounts were motivated by desires to discover and describe exploitable resources, some drew upon words and images expressly to preserve and protect natural places, such as John Muir advocating for Yosemite. In 1871, Thomas Moran accompanied geologist Ferdinand V. Hayden's expedition to map the region around Yellowstone. He kept a journal in which he recorded detailed descriptions of his travels, and he also produced numerous watercolor studies and field sketches of more than thirty different sites. Once back in his studio, he worked from these notes and sketches to produce larger images, including huge wall-sized murals depicting the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone. His works—the first ever color images of this unique landscape—influenced members of the United States Congress to preserve the area as the first National Park. While not always successful in producing acts of Congress, the affective power of nature art and nature writing has moved more than human emotions—it has effectively moved (or prevented the moving!) of mountains, streams, and endangered plants and animals.

11. First presented as a talk at the fourth World Wilderness Congress in Denver and Estes Park, Colorado, in 1987; Roderick Frazier Nash, "Why Wilderness?" in *Reading the Environment*, ed. Melissa Walker, 74–83 (New York: W.W. Norton, 1994). Nash's best-known books include *Wilderness and the American Mind* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1967) and *The Rights of Nature: A History of Environmental Ethics* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989).

12. "Why Wilderness?" 75–77, 78–79, 80, 81.

13. Ibid., 81

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid., 82.

16. As he has commented upon works from the Heian and Kamakura periods (794–1185 and 1185–1333, respectively), "people really believed they could depict the human world in its entirety in this format. They thought they could express nearly anything with drawings and words, whether it was related to politics, economics, art, religion, the supernatural world, or even erotica." Mischievously evading any grand pronouncements about the direct influence on his own use of similar forms, he continues: "When I tell my interviewers from abroad that we see the same phenomenon in the turbulent history of modern Japan, as we did in the ferment of the late Heian period or the Kamakura

periods, and that in this period narrative picture scrolls were resurrected as manga, then they all go home happy" (*Starting Point*, 96).

17. See Clive Ponting's *A Green History of the World: The Environment and the Collapse of Great Civilizations* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991). American readers may be more familiar with the similar environmental histories told through the popular science books of Jared Diamond such as *Guns, Germs, and Steel* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1997) and *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed* (New York: Penguin, 2005).

18. See Ponting, *A Green History*, esp. 393–407.

19. To the best of my knowledge Miyazaki has not explicitly gone on record favoring natural preservation for any specific scientific or medical benefits it may hold, in a kind of "save the rainforest, it may hold the cure to cancer" kind of way, as Nash suggests. In fact, he has advocated for quite the opposite position, stating that in his view it is "a mistake to think about nature from the idea of efficiency, that forests should be preserved because they are essential for human beings" (*Starting Point*, 359).

20. One important scientific realization that Miyazaki had (circa 1960) has strongly influenced his own world view: "Our society—including our homes and families and way of living—[is] actually predicated on and supported by photosynthesis in the natural world" (ibid., 107).

21. Ibid., 358; 162–63.

22. Disbelieving that the gods reside "inside those gaudy shrines," he instead feels that "it seems much more likely . . . that the gods of the Japanese are deep in the mountains and far-off valleys" (ibid., 359–60).

23. Ibid., 357–58.

24. Ibid., 356–57.

25. Margaret Talbot, "The Auteur of Anime," *New Yorker,* January 17, 2005: 75. Such statements make one wonder whether Miyazaki-san's own cigarette habit may stem from a residual self-loathing of his human self, a kind of species-guilt (like Porco/Marco's "pigishness"). Thanks to Victor T. Wilson, MD, for suggesting the "species-guilt" reference.

26. Here I use the comparative "deeper" with all due respect and caution, wishing to avoid any evocation of the polarizing rhetoric of "deep versus shallow" as well as "deep versus deeper" semantics that seems so often to occur within debates of deep ecology. Instead, I hope that this use of the word will be read as an indication of a *qualitative* rather than *quantitative* difference as explained in the text.

27. Indeed, a greatly underappreciated factor in Miyazaki's resistance to environmentalist interpretations of his films may be his impatience with the tendency of anime critics to focus on the *literal* meaning of the eco-themes, allusions, and imagery that they find in his work. By identifying and assigning concrete meanings to such visual and narrative details, they isolate them from their greater and more abstract contexts and thus limit their artistic and representational potential to a merely precise, factual and ordinary understanding. In doing so, these critics and their readers miss the *deeper* magic and mystery of *metaphor*—the myriad meanings that can only be realized in the consciousness and unconsciousness of myriad individual minds. Appreciated within such a vast interconnected living system of metaphoric representation and signification, Miyazaki's aesthetic ethic offers a powerful clue to its own complexity: whatever you think this means to you, however much you may value it, always be mindful that it may have other meanings and other values to others.

28. *Starting Point*, 17.

29. Ibid., 25; 49.

30. Ibid., 35; 41.

31. For example, he avoids ridiculing human error in a "base and vicious" manner and instead attempts to generate a "fascinated" and "delighted laughter" that helps viewers "sense the humanity" in us all (*Starting Point*, 21–22). He has also "resolved not to draw [weapons, military vehicles, and war technology] in a fashion that feeds an infatuation with power" but instead uses images of technology that emphasize its higher potential to "liberate humanity from the things that hold us back" (ibid., 46).

32. Ibid., 70; 51.

33. For a contemporary perspective, see Ian Condry, *The Soul of Anime: Collaborative Creativity and Japan's Media Success Story* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2013).

34. *Starting Point*, 84.

35. Ibid., 83, 84.

36. Ibid., 165.

37. Ibid., 141; 291.

38. Ibid., 83; 251. And, having developed a particular way of perceiving the world, he feels driven to effectively communicate that worldview to others, so he pushes himself to perfect the technical skills he needs to do so effectively (ibid., 145–47; 87; 147; 173; 170).

39. Indeed, one of Miyazaki's most telling artistic critiques of another animator's style is his complaint that the imagery in Tezuka's animation so often displays a "bankruptcy of . . . vanity" in the way that "he was consciously and deliberately trying to depict some apocalyptic beauty and impress everyone" (ibid., 195; 108; 159).

40. Ibid., 158. He has personally experienced how such an image caused him to wonder about its meaning, to meditate on it for a long time, re-creating it in his own mind as he uses it to make deeper meaning out of the film, his own perceptions, and life in general (ibid., 160).

41. Miyazaki's metaphoric method of imagery offers his viewers the same chance to synthesize and encapsulate his whole message in a single visual meme, holding his whole imagined animated world at once in our minds. His "poetic" usage of imagery seems to have much in common with the emblematic tradition as well as the related inventive techniques of seventeenth-century English metaphysical poetry in which writers like John Donne, Andrew Marvell, George Herbert, and others attempted to create a complex extended conceit, or descriptive analogy, that represented multiple (even paradoxical) meanings and perspectives on a particular theme or moral truth.

42. Miyazaki has stated: "The idea that nature is always gentle and will give birth to something like the Sea of Decay in order to restore an environment polluted by humans is a total lie. And I believe that the idea that we should cling to such a saccharine world view is a big problem . . . Ecosystems can't possibly exist for a particular purpose" (*Starting Point*, 169–70).

43. The full quotation reads: "There is definitely a fissure in humanity's karma. When we consider the relationship between nature and humans, although humans are a part of nature and nature gives us life, there is a definite break between us and nature. We try to conserve nature because it yields a nature useful to us as a species. But nature is essentially savage. It negates culture and civilization. Despite humans' efforts to improve things

for themselves, nature contains elements flatly opposed to our efforts. And in certain cases these lead to rifts between societies and ethnic groups / I am a person who thinks we should consider environmental issues from the point of view of the civility I learned from Shiba-san. We need to show civility not only to other living things but also, I think, to the water, the mountains, and the air. At a minimum, to be civil means to initiate civility, but not to demand it of others" (ibid., 312).

44. After admitting to the kids that he "still need[s] to study and learn about a lot of other things," he suggests to them that, "if you look at the world in the way I have described it I'm sure you'll discover that there are lots of amazing mysteries out there . . . Rather than make a film with bees in it, using an electron microscope to just magnify and reveal their world, I've always thought that it would be far more interesting to make something from within the world of the bee, from the perspective of the bee. Such a film like this would probably be far more interesting than one about going to another planet. I've always thought this, but somehow it's always been too difficult to do" (ibid., 148–56).

45. Ibid., 164.

46. Ibid., 394. Wanting so much for his animation to express the essence of life, he knows that the concept of "selfish genes" in no way encompasses the awe-filled scope of the biological, physical, spiritual, and cosmological aspects at the heart of the problem.

47. For greater explication of how this sensibility plays itself out in the making of his films, see his important discussion of the visual and tactile images created by his key animator, Futaki Makiko (*Starting Point,* 198–99) and his extended remarks regarding the difficulty he experienced in thinking his way through the epistemological and existential dilemmas of the *Nausicaä* manga, which are also biological, psychological, social, and political ones (ibid., 392–402).

48. He warns, however, against an overreliance on anthropomorphic identification, as it provides an "easy target for empathy." Instead, he urges us to try a more deeply valuable and interesting approach by allowing ourselves to appreciate and experience becoming intrigued by something when "we don't know what it is thinking" (ibid., 415).

49. Ibid., 305.

50. Ibid., 393.

51. Ibid., 406; 274.

52. Only time will tell whether James Cameron's use of Miyazaki's "floating island" imagery in his film *Avatar* (2009) is a thoughtful and respectful homage or opportunistic "sampling." Artist Roger Dean is suing Cameron for what he believes was unlawful infringement of his album cover art, which predates both *Avatar* and *Castle in the Sky* imagery. *How to Train Your Dragon 2* (dir. Dean DeBlois, 2014) includes several apparently innocent and genuinely loving echoes of Miyazaki's imagery: the love of flying shown by the dragon-riders, a brief glimpse of a flying island, the lush hidden natural utopia of Valka's dragon sanctuary as well as her "warrior princess" mask and shield à la *Princess Mononoke.*

53. *Starting Point,* 170; 388.

54. Ibid., 403–4.

BRETT HACK

Ominous Images of Youth: Worlds, Identities, and Violence in Japanese News Media and *When They Cry*

On July 12, 2013, a sixteen-year-old girl walked into a Hiroshima police station with a confession: "I killed my friend and dumped her body in the mountains."[1] The ensuing investigation revealed that the killing involved six others, only one of whom was a legal adult. A quarrel between the girls that started on LINE, a popular Japanese social messaging application, ended as a fatal group assault. "How did something like this escalate into a crime?" one investigator was quoted as saying. "There are parts of this that I just can't understand."[2]

This comment exposes a perspective, common in Japanese society, that youth are ever more prone to inexplicable acts of violence. News programs show these tragedies flaring up out of nowhere, for no foreseeable reason, dangerously close to home.[3] Another evocative case occurred in 2007 in Kyōtanabe, where a high school girl woke up one morning, dressed herself in black, and killed her sleeping father with an axe. The genre-perfect horror of the incident prompted some to locate its cause in fiction itself. One of the suspects was *Higurashi no naku koro ni* (2006, *When They Cry*), in which a traumatized girl attacks her enemies with an axe. Originally a *dōjin* visual novel (a narrative video game by an amateur developers' circle), this series expanded into a cultural phenomenon with adaptations in almost every media form.[4]

Its spectacle of sweet *moe* characters committing gruesome acts of violence prompted condemnation in association with the incident. *Move*—one of the light news programs known in Japan as "wide shows"—explicitly forced this connection (Figures 1 and 2).[5] Pointing to parallels between the show and the murder, the host Horie Masao asked, "Even if this wasn't the direct cause, if she compared herself to it and then carried out the murder . . . what are we to make of that?" Online voices often cite this segment as a factor in the cancellation of the anime on several television networks.[6]

FIGURE 1. One young character assaults another in one of *Higurashi no naku koro ni*'s more gruesome scenes.

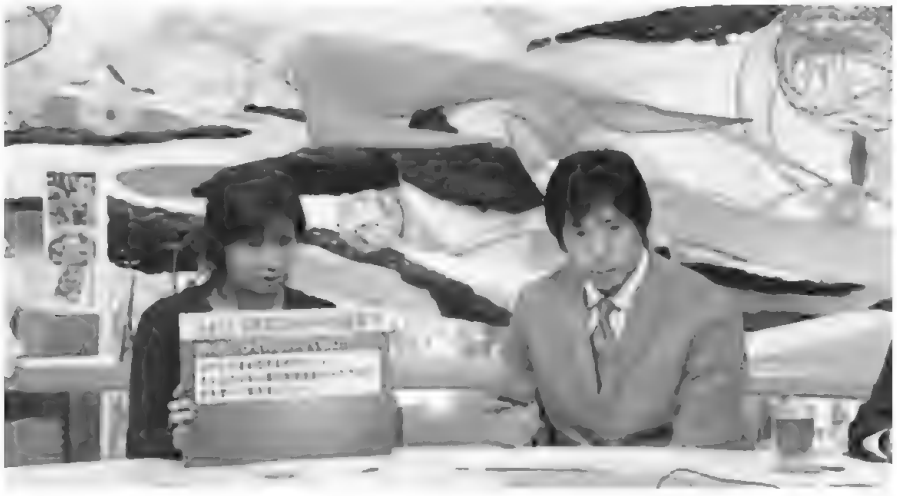


FIGURE 2. The *Move* anchors propose a connection between *Higurashi* and the Kyōtanabe incident.

Move's sense of crisis clashes with the fact that violent youth crime is on the decline in Japan. Reflecting on this, Kondō Jun'ya accuses the news media of crass sensationalism. "Deprived of the facts, people's fears and imaginations become more and more detached from reality," he writes, "until this ominous image of youth takes on a life of its own."[7]

But the media did not create this image by itself. Indeed, *Move*'s denunciation of *Higurashi* is ironic, since both are working with a cultural motif that sees youths and adults as existing in two separate worlds of experience. These spheres are examples of what anthropologist Clifford Geertz calls the "coordinates of the experienced world."[8] According to Geertz, humans depend on this kind of symbolic mapping to make sense of not only their actions but the entirety of society itself. However, these systems do not always match the actual state of social relations. Changes can render them unviable, producing a crisis of representation.[9] Such is the case here, where the perceived world of Japanese youth has become invisible to the dominant social imagination. The "ominous image of youth" Kondō describes exists now as a vaguely drawn character threatening cultural order through its lack of any cohesive description. The violence is merely the traumatic manifestation of a hidden subjectivity.

To visualize this narrative leading from seeming harmony to horrible violence, nonfictional news sources must position themselves in the world of adults, peering into the other hidden world in an attempt to delineate its social relations. In contrast, *Higurashi* imagines the psychological experience *from the inside* of the youth world, exposing the cognitive limitations of the dual-world structure itself. For all its shock value, *Higurashi* is earnestly seeking to escape from violence. To do this, it imagines *multiple* worlds using a narrative structure based on plural timelines. Combined with the text's copious pastiche and *moe* elements, these worlds posit youth subjects that contain myriad variations of the self. The way out of violence, *Higurashi* suggests, is a more fluid understanding of the complex identities that occupy our cultural coordinates.

THE WALL BETWEEN WORLDS: INSIDE AND OUTSIDE

Social commentary on the issue of youth violence in Japan has also evoked—consciously or not—the image of a barrier between the experience of youth and that of adults. Yamazaki Tetsu, for example, claims that "the imaginations of parents and teachers haven't reached the situation in which children now find themselves." Tamai Masaaki and Tamai Yasuyuki suggest the same

idea when they say that "young people's environment contains such a complex set of factors that it is difficult to identify the cause of their actions."[10]

AN AXE-WIELDING TEENAGER INCITES MORE FEAR THAN A *YAKUZA* STABBING BECAUSE WE DO NOT KNOW WHERE SHE COMES FROM.

One particularly cogent formulation comes from Doi Takayoshi, who argues that fears of increasingly criminalized youth develop from a basic misperception. In the cultural mind, "a distinct boundary exists between the world of adults and the world of youth, with the youth revolting against the world of adults while nurturing a hierarchical culture based on group solidarity."[11] But as the social cohesion of Japan's bubble period retreats ever further into the past, these identifiable rebel subcultures are disappearing, so that the conception of separate worlds has lost its visible locus. Doi contends that this lack of visibility increases the general feeling of social unease connected to Japan's youth:

> Why is it that discussions that portray youth as monsters are proliferating, or that average people are feeling less and less safe? It is because the culture of delinquency is becoming more difficult to transmit, because youth crime has lost a certain "narrative quality," and because the meaning of these activities is becoming harder to discern. It is this "I can't understand why" feeling that is strengthening people's feelings of unrest.[12]

This idea of a lack of narrative forms the most compelling part of Doi's thesis and informs the media depictions of youth violence we have discussed. An axe-wielding teenager incites more fear than a *yakuza* stabbing because we do not know where she comes from. *Yakuza* violence conforms to cultural descriptions of criminals. We feel we have a grasp of the perpetrators: we think we understand what they look like, where they might be found, how they live. The world they inhabit exists as a recognized setting for a particular story. The teenage axe murder also triggers a narrative urge but does not conform to our script. She is a youth; she has committed a crime. Therefore she must inhabit a separate world. And yet this world is invisible to us. This disjunction forms our "ominous image," and with it arises our need to see beyond the barrier, to dramatize this unseen space.

Wide shows are particularly geared toward this enterprise. These programs generally run in daytime slots, with some breakfast slots as well. Providing extended coverage of a "wide" range of stories from hard news to gossip, they feature "specialist" commentators whose simplified analyses are meant to render the news more accessible to a general viewer. While not necessarily

sensationalist, their attempts to cater to their audience of homemakers and work-bound employees lead wide shows to adopt a moral-majority position, particularly in their coverage of crime. Their commentary format also tends to encourage speculation about root causes that often leads to reactionary conclusions. Although generally missing the commentary format, evening news programs on private networks also exhibit these leanings. Most important for the present discussion, these programs' in-depth approach necessitates the creation of a narrative, making them especially susceptible to cultural perceptions like the one Doi describes.

This framework helps us understand why coverage of the Hiroshima incident paid so much attention to the suspects' LINE community. Their lives, like those of most young Japanese, occurred in closed spaces—on their cell phones, inside cars, in private karaoke boxes. The news programs struggled to remove the fourth walls from these isolated rooms. Websites disclosed colorful screenshots of the LINE conversations where the suspects discussed the murder. Programs used infographics to map the suspects' relationships, with arrows indicating "acquaintance," "couple," and "ex-classmate" (Figure 3). One segment featured a reporter riding in a vehicle like the one used in the incident, following the path into the mountains where the body was dumped.[13] These visual strategies mimic a glimpse into this miniature society, with the viewers meant to feel as if they are looking over the shoulder of the texter, or sitting in the car as the fateful event unfolds.

However, these attempted views are consistently blurred. The dark content of the LINE conversation clashes shockingly with the bubbly display and pastel colors, generating a sense of unease but no real understanding of the incident. In Figure 3 the viewer sees only one face—that of the only legal adult—and even this is only dimly viewed through a window. For the rest, we have shots of Timberland boots, tracks suits, rubber sandals, or simply gendered pink and blue icons. These cues succeed in evoking an image of "youth" in the same way a fleeting glance on the street might. They fail to resolve into a whole narrative, and the viewer is left in the original position, staring fearfully at vague manifestations of something just beyond view.

The *Move* segment on the Kyōtanabe incident faces an even greater challenge. The young parricide is characterized as a *yoiko* (good child), the type of youth who shows no outward signs of risk.[14] Attempts to reconstruct her social world meet with interviews from teachers and classmates describing only her perfect attendance and drawing skills. The segment's visuals display a corollary sense of desperation. Everything from club records to school writing assignments is harvested in the search for a connection. Particularly telling

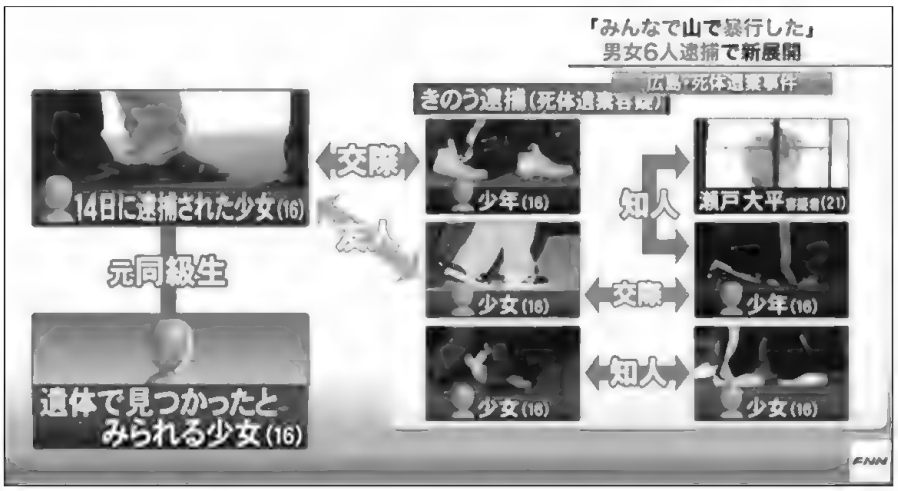


FIGURE 3. A news program attempts to map out the relationships of those involved in the Hiroshima incident.

are the repeated close-ups of windows in the suspect's home. They seem to hint that if we stare hard enough we just might be able to see inside to where the deeper drama played out, allowing us to solidify the nebulous figure of this *yoiko* criminal. But as with the Hiroshima incident we remain outside, our line of sight blocked. These depictions of youth violence in the news media, attempting to lift the ominous veil between the two perceived worlds, serve only to reinforce it.

We find this same frustrated position once in *Higurashi,* at the end of the story arc called *Onikakushi hen* (Taken by demons arc), when the detective Ōishi narrates his strangely wide show–like report on the children's deaths over crime scene shots and dossier photographs. This is one of the few moments when the viewer is positioned outside the invisible world, attempting to look in. As we have seen, programs like *Move* instinctively adopt this position; we can say that they have no other position to adopt. As "adult" media, they are locked into the fixed subject position of a mainstream viewer. But *Higurashi* can also position itself *inside* the world of youth, where it uses the closed-world schema to imagine exactly why depicting youth is such a problem.

Higurashi is somewhat difficult to summarize, since it actively sets out to confuse the viewer. Instead of a single narrative, it consists of several *hen* or story arcs that share some major plot events but present them differently and often have different narratives altogether. These arcs—later revealed to be successive repetitions of the characters' world—revolve around five young people

in a rural village called Hinamizawa. The nostalgic setting provides a fitting backdrop for their peaceful lives together, until they become involved in a series of unsolved murders connected to the village's history. Into these murders enter such varied generic tropes as disease outbreaks, special ops teams, ancient curses, *yakuza,* and even aliens. Combined with the seemingly gratuitous bricolage of *moe* elements in its main characters, *Higurashi* seems to exemplify the database of generic elements famously described by Azuma Hiroki.[15]

Earlier in the *Onikakushi hen*, the main character Keiichi struggles to keep his friend Rena out of his empty house, as she has become inexplicably demonic. Following Keiichi's gaze, we see her distorted eyes through the door cleft and watch her hand pulling at the chain lock. We hear her voice modulate from sweet to enraged. We feel the threat of violence but cannot grasp exactly what has happened to her or what she wants with Keiichi. This scene exemplifies *Higurashi*'s point of view—looking outward at an unknown threat, with no way of communicating with the outside world. This moment will not appear in Ōishi's report—Keiichi's experience cannot pass beyond the circle of the young characters. *Higurashi*'s entire backdrop works to visualize this barrier. As in many anime, adults seem to live completely separate lives, as when Keiichi's parents go on a sudden business trip that night. The settings also feel isolated from the world at large. We walk with the characters through lonely spaces of reference: a tiny classroom after school, deserted country roads, telephone booths, hilltop shrines, places that evoke images of society but are devoid of other people. These devices separate the lives of the characters from the adult world.[16]

Each arc opens with a light-hearted tone, showing off each female character's *moe* traits with comedic scenes, until they hear the story of the Hinamizawa murders. These classically Todorovian disruptions, which precipitate the switch from *moe* comedy to horror-mystery, invariably occur with the approach of adults who embody society at large: a police detective, a photojournalist, a doctor, an amateur researcher.[17] The mysteries evoke images of traditional Japanese folklore or of social unrest in the postwar development period, creating a dark vision of the adult society that the viewer hopes to penetrate.

However, the generic resolution of the mystery is inevitably foiled. Instead of grasping the overarching story, the narrative force turns inward to the youths' interactions. In the scene at the door, we understand that Rena is somehow implicated in "Oyashiro-sama's curse," the legacy of a vengeful deity in some way connected with the murders. However, discussion of the curse is absent as Rena and Keiichi argue about which of them is lying. After Keiichi crushes her hand in the door, Rena leaves, apologizing for "taking

the joke too far." In each arc, the "mystery" functions not as a problem to be solved but as a specter that destroys the trust between characters. Although the larger narratives of history, tradition, society, and religion are present, we are only able to perceive them dimly, as incomprehensible projections into the closed world of youth.

SEALED IN THEIR HERMETIC SPHERE, THE CHARACTERS IMAGINE THEIR LIVES SOLELY IN TERMS OF THEIR PEER GROUP.

In short, we experience a fictional replication of the same feelings evident in the news broadcasts. Both utilize the conception of a separate invisible world that manifests in the subject's own world as violence. By repositioning the subject, *Higurashi* gives the "outside" world of mainstream society the ominous role. It lends subjectivity to the at-risk youth, or more accurately, it inserts our own subjectivity into theirs. The scale is smaller, but the desire for a stable worldview remains the same. Sealed in their hermetic sphere, the characters imagine their lives solely in terms of their peer group. Threats from beyond the border destabilize their miniature society, just as the ensuing violence destabilizes adult society. The mutual impenetrability of the two worlds is shown to be damaging to both sides.

This conception of dual worlds cannot provide the conditions for renewal in either *Higurashi* or the mass media: the wide shows' fixed position reproduces their own blindness, while the fictional characters' attempts to stabilize their lives through their friends descends into atrocity. But here we find *Higurashi*'s key manipulation of the schema. Although this descent is instigated by forces from the outside, the violence itself comes from within. Rena and Keiichi's altercation starts with Oyashiro-sama's curse but ends with their broken images of each other. Like the mass media, *Higurashi* locates the problem—the source of violence—in the figure of youth, except here the problem is as much psychological as social. The anime's plural narratives and visual strategies characterize the issue as a conflict between the youths' desire for stability and the unfixed multiplicity of their inner selves.

WORLDS OF IDENTITIES

Doi explains that young Japanese are suffering "a loss of structural stability" in their peer groups:

> Delinquent youth these days do not feel a sense of safety in their daily human relations. Because of this, they exhibit an increasing sense of worry

> about the members of their group . . . Simply maintaining their internal human relations within their peer group is so completely exhausting.[18]

Young people attempt to "maintain smooth surface-level relations" since differences in identity rising "to the surface" may cause confrontation.[19] The characters in *Higurashi* exhibit this anxiety about individual identity within a group that Doi describes. Yoshida Masataka touches on this when he characterizes the narrative development of *Higurashi* as the search for "a true bond":

> The young men and women in the story each have their own complicated pasts . . . However, they don't speak of these things to their friends at school, and try to enjoy their time together, at least on the surface . . . This friendship that exists in the first part of each arc begins to crumble. They become consumed by suspicion and end up killing each other. However, by exposing each other's selves, the characters continue to ask: "What is a true bond? What is the real way to interact?" They grope blindly for these answers.[20]

HIGURASHI'S MOE ELEMENTS ARE ACTUALLY NARRATIVE CUES THAT LEAD THE VIEWER THROUGH THE PROCESS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL FRAGMENTATION.

The characters attempt to turn group unity into a kind of panacea. "I want to enjoy my days surrounded by beloved friends," explains Rika in the *Himatsubushi hen* (Time-killing arc). Her wish can be interpreted as the desire for an unchallenged self that is "surrounded" and reinforced by friends with similarly stable identities.

But the harmony between these friends is alarmingly brittle. Stimulated by the threats from the world outside, fluctuations in characters' identities breed tensions between them, warping their interpersonal relationships into frightening shapes. *Higurashi* deftly uses character design to visualize this breakdown. Figure 4 shows two shots of Rena at the door. The upper shot exhibits the simple geometry of *moe* design, while the lower goes into great detail to depict a moment of rage. Alterations in character design are common in anime, but *Higurashi* manages to link these changes to deeper psychological motivations. As discussed earlier, *moe* elements form the initial equilibrium of the story: the flat, harmonious features visualize the tenuous surface-level relations of the friends. When the façade of unity is broken, the ugly details of a character's identity rise to the surface with threatening clarity, and when the *moe* design resurfaces it feels empty and hollow. We are no longer able trust its friendly image, since as

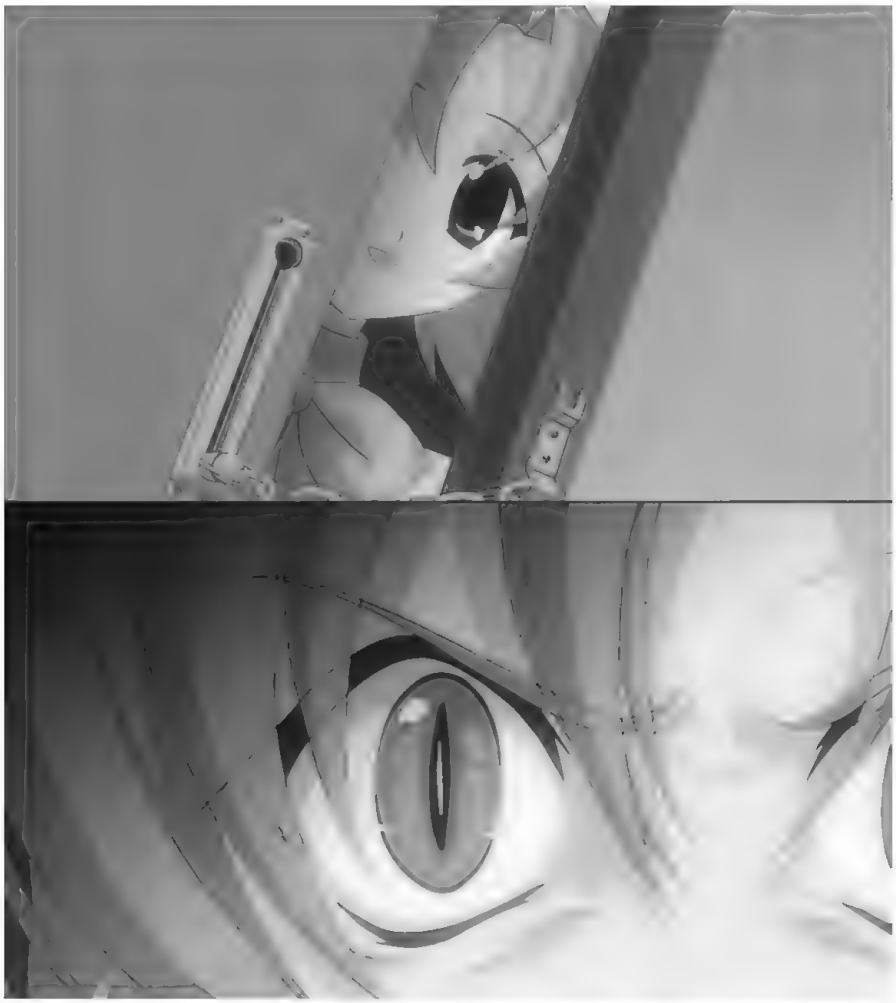


FIGURE 4. Character design dramatizes an identity shift in Rena, as seen from Keiichi's point of view.

Yamazaki puts it, "another hidden self" exists below the veneer of conformity.[21] *Higurashi's moe* elements are actually narrative cues that lead the viewer through the process of psychological fragmentation.

The multiple plot arcs further destabilize character identity, in that each arc presents a different world and a different version of the characters. Across the arcs, we see Rena not only as demonic minion, but also as girl next door, psychotic terrorist, and even cool-headed counselor. Keiichi perceives himself as the victim in the *Onikakushi hen,* but the *Tsumihoroboshi hen* (Atonement arc) reveals him to be a delusory maniac. In the *Tatarigoroshi hen* (Curse-killing arc), Satoko switches from crafty strategist to catatonic wreck. The

twins Mion and Shion exchange roles between and within stories, confusing viewers and characters alike. The closed world of youth is actually several worlds, with each single subject a succession of conflicting selves, some friendly, some dangerous. This is the method behind *Higurashi*'s mad collage. Viewer confusion is in fact the goal of these affective strategies. The arcs'/worlds' accumulated selves illustrate how the complexities of identity impede a simple ordering of one's social world. The characters' isolated *moe* paradise is dependent on flat images of each other, which the nature of the text ultimately renders impossible. Violence emerges as a result of panic brought on by this crisis of plurality. *Higurashi* thereby draws us into a world of youth fixated on certainty yet unable to find it, with unknown dangers approaching from both without and within.

Higurashi cannot imagine an escape from violence within the dual-world structure it inherits from the cultural imagination. Instead, it finds its solution in the same multiple-world strategy it uses to dramatize youth subjectivity. The *Minagoroshi hen* (Massacre arc) in the second anime series opens to find Rika floating in a void amid fragments of scenes from previous arcs, which for the first time are clearly explained as parallel worlds (Figure 5). It is revealed that the characters have been doomed to repeat variations of the summer of 1983, with all versions ending in disaster. Rika, the only character who retains the memory of past worlds, has been trying unsuccessfully to "break through this maze of tragedy with no exit."[22] After dying, she briefly remains in this liminal space to reflect on their mistakes before entering the next world.

WHERE THE NEWS SOURCES' PSEUDO-SOCIOLOGICAL POSITION DEAD-ENDS, *HIGURASHI*'S FREEDOM AS A FICTIONAL TEXT ALLOWS IT TO REVERSE THE PERSPECTIVE AND IMAGINE THAT FOR THE YOUTHS, TOO, THE SOURCE OF THE PROBLEM IS THE IMAGE OF THEMSELVES.

This save/load logic is not rare in anime. Elsewhere in this volume Forrest Greenwood provides an excellent analysis of how the anime *Puella Magi Madoka Magica* utilizes game time within its narrative structure. (Like Rika, *Madoka Magica*'s Homura travels through different timelines in order to prevent a tragedy.) But whereas Greenwood's analysis shows *Madoka Magica* to be skeptical of the merits of such an endeavor, *Higurashi* adopts the solution wholeheartedly. Salvation lies in the *recognition* of this multiple structure. Rika's moment between and outside the world arcs functions not only as the narrative's pivot point but also as its moral impetus. After the viewer is allowed to share in her reflection, *Higurashi*'s dark tone gives way to irrepressible

FIGURE 5. As Rika floats in the space between worlds, she is surrounded by shards showing scenes from previous arcs.

optimism as her friends also begin to remember moments from their lives in past worlds. These transworld epiphanies serve as moments of pause, leading the characters to deal with their problems in healthy ways. One pertinent example occurs when the group attempts to rescue Satoko from her abusive uncle. Instead of murdering the uncle as in a previous arc, they organize a sit-in at the child welfare office, enlisting the support of the entire village. For once, members of the adult world are portrayed as attentive to the needs of the young and capable of change. In the final arc, the young characters are similarly able to team up with "good" adults and unmask the culprit behind the murders. Recognizing the errors of their past selves not only provides the youths an escape from violence but also allows to them break down the barrier and connect with the world outside.

Of course, outside the realm of fiction, we are bound to linear time; events in our lives cannot be replayed. But these experiments with multiple worlds offer a valuable perspective on the way we read our cultural maps and assign people locations within them. Both *Higurashi no naku koro ni* and the news programs discussed are feeling their way through an altered landscape, seeking to envision a new map or narrative for a troubled social group conceived of as invisible. Where the news sources' pseudo-sociological position dead-ends, *Higurashi*'s freedom as a fictional text allows it to reverse the perspective and imagine that for the youths, too, the source of the problem is the image of themselves. The characters' visions of other worlds offer up

a multifaceted way of seeing. In a very Lacanian (but even more Buddhist) dynamic, their fixations on stable identities breed neuroses. Where the self comprises multiple worlds of experience, obsession with a single image leads only to monomania. This happens to the characters in *Higurashi*. We can imagine it happening to the youth of the Hiroshima incident. It surely happened when a news program took up *Higurashi*—a story so intently seeking a solution to youth violence that it traveled through parallel universes to find it—then reduced it to one image of a character with an axe and turned it into a cause of the problem.

If (borrowing from Geertz again) we understand culture as the stories we tell ourselves about ourselves, it follows that we must exert a certain flexibility when assigning roles to the characters around us.[23] News depictions aim to delineate and thereby neutralize the amorphous threat of violent youth. They require "youth" to conform to a simple grouping: either visibly bad or essentially good. Such simple coordinates cannot chart the unpredictable universe inside an individual. As Geertz writes, "There is something to be said for not confusing our traffic with symbols for our traffic with objects and human beings, for these latter are not in themselves symbols, however much they function as such."[24] *Higurashi*'s proactive alterations show the youth taking the initiative and reaching out to the multiple worlds of adults after coming to terms with their own multiplicity. Once they learn to read themselves and each other more flexibly, they are able to do the same with other spheres of society. What was once an ominous front becomes a space they can move through freely. *Higurashi* seems to want to believe that, like the image of the self, the barrier between the youth and adult world is negotiable after all.

Notes

1. "Ubatta kane o nana yōgisha de yamawake, kōkai shitemo shazai nashi" (Seven suspects divide stolen money, express regret but offer no apology), *MSN Sankei News* website, August 4, 2013, http://sankei.jp.msn.com/west/west_affairs/news/130804/waf13080407180001-n1.htm. All in-text translations in this essay are my own.

2. "Jūrokusai shōjo ga riaru ni mita 'jibun ga koroshita dokyūsei shōjo no furan itai' . . . LINE de kenka, baacharu na bato no sue ni" (Sixteen-year old girl saw "the rotting body of the classmate she killed" . . . a quarrel on LINE: the endpoint of virtual abuse), *MSN Sankei News* website, July 27, 2013, http://sankei.jp.msn.com/west/west_affairs/news/130727/waf13072707000002-n4.htm.

3. Doi Takayoshi, *Wakamono no kibun: Shōnen hanzai genshō no paradokusu* (Young people's feelings: The paradox of decreasing youth crime) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten 2012), 3–4.

4. Textual analysis in this essay refers to the two main anime series, which parallel the original game story: *Higurashi no naku koro ni* (2006. dir. Kon Chiaki, TV series, 26 episodes), translated as *When They Cry* (6-DVD boxed set, Funimation Studios, 2010), and *Higurashi no naku koro ni kai* (2007, dir. Kon Chiaki, TV series, 24 episodes) translated as *Higurashi no naku koro ni kai* (4-DVD boxed set, Siren Visual, 2013).

5. The term *moe* and its verb form *moeru* describe a fan's love for a fictional character. Either entire characters or their specific attributes can cause this reaction. As Patrick Galbraith has noted, *moe* "indicates a *response* to fantasy characters, not a specific style." However, Galbraith also recognizes that certain characters or aspects are more likely to achieve this response: large eyes, neon hair, and hyperbolic cuteness are merely the most basic examples. Indeed, it would hardly be an exaggeration to say that the majority of anime/manga characters today are created with *moe* in mind. Here we can understand the term "*moe* characters" to mean "characters designed to evoke *moe*." Patrick Galbraith, "*Moe*: Exploring Virtual Potential in Post-Millennial Japan," *Electronic Journal of Contemporary Japanese Studies* 5 (2009), http://www.japanesestudies.org.uk/articles/2009/Galbraith.html#_edn12.

6. *Move* (Mūbu), TV broadcast, Asahi Broadcasting Corporation, September 19, 2007. For an example of the online reaction, see ui553120tr and sisyokuin, posts to *Yahoo Japan chiebukuro*, September 21, 2007, http://detail.chiebukuro.yahoo.co.jp/qa/question_detail/q1412843854.

7. Kondō Jun'ya, "Seishōnen no satsujin no jittai" (The facts about youth homicide), in *Hito wo ayameru seishōnen no kokoro* (The hearts of youth who kill), ed. Kōno Shōko (Tokyo: Kitatairo Shobō, 2009), 39.

8. Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 28.

9. Ibid, 169.

10. Yamazaki Tetsu, *Shōnen jiken bukku: Ibasho no nai kodomotachi* (The youth crime book: Children with no place to go) (Tokyo: Shunjusha 1998), 4; Tamai Masaaki and Tamai Yasuyuki, *Shōnen kyōaku hanzai / mondai kōdō wa naze okirunoka* (Why does violent youth crime / deliquency occur?) (Tokyo: Gyōsei 2002), 120.

11. Doi Takayoshi, *Ningen shikkaku? Tsumi o okashita shōnen to shakai o tsunagu* (No longer human? Connecting children who "sin" and society) (Tokyo: Nihon Tosho Sentaa 2010), 71.

12. Ibid., 65.

13. *MSN Sankei News* website, July 27, 2013, http://sankei.jp.msn.com; *FNN Super News,* TV broadcast, hosted by Andō Yūko, Fuji Television Network, July 18, 2013; *N Suta,* TV broadcast, hosted by Horio Masaaki, Tokyo Broadcasting System, date unknown.

14. For a discussion of *yoiko* in regard to youth crime, see Urabe Shin'ichi, *Kodomotachi no itsudatsu / hikō* (Deviancy and delinquency in children) (Tokyo: Gakubunsha, 2007), 78–99.

15. Azuma Hiroki, *Dōbutsuka suru posutomodaan: Otaku kara mita nihon shakai* (Tokyo: Kōdansha 2001), 62–70; translated by Jonathon E. Abel and Shion Kono as *Otaku: Japan's Database Animals* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009).

16. In an interesting twist, some of these separated sites in the series are actually based on real-world locations. See Dale K. Andrews's anthropological study of the *Higurashi* pilgrimage, in which fans connect with the series and with one another by traveling

to the village of Shirakawagō in Gifu prefecture, the real town that formed the basis for Hinamizawa. Dale K. Andrews, "Genesis at the Shrine: The Votive Art of an Anime Pilgrimage," *Mechademia* 9 (2014).

17. Tsvetan Todorov, *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre,* trans. Richard Howard (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973), 24–25.

18. Doi, *Ningen shikkaku?,* 76–78.

19. Ibid., 116–17.

20. Yoshida Masataka, "'Higurashi no naku koro ni' ga satsujin jiken wo hikiokoshitanoka? Tōkyō Daigaku tokunin kyōshi Yoshida Masataka ni kiku" (Did "Higurashi no naku koro ni" cause a murder? An interview with Tokyo University instructor Yoshida Masataka), *J-Cast News* website, February 12, 2008, http://www.j-cast.com/2008/02/12016568.html.

21. Yamazaki, *Shōnen jiken bukku,* 19–20.

22. This strategy accounts in some part for *Higurashi*'s popularity. All arcs occurring in the different crossover products—games, anime, manga, live-action movies—constitute new versions of the "summer of 1983" that the characters have endured. The worlds can multiply infinitely while still maintaining the integrity of the original story.

23. Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures,* 448.

24. Ibid., 92.

KENDALL HEITZMAN

Parallel Universes, Vertical Worlds, and the Nation as Palimpsest in Murakami Ryū's *The World Five Minutes from Now*

In Murakami Ryū's stunning novel *Gofungo no sekai* (1994, The world five minutes from now), Odagiri Akira, an aging adult-film producer, goes out jogging one day near his weekend home in Hakone and suddenly finds the world around him transformed into a war zone, a parallel-universe Japan five minutes in the future. In this alternative world, rather than accepting the terms of the Potsdam Declaration to end World War II, Japan instead continued to wage a guerilla war against the Allied Powers. In a social-studies textbook, Odagiri finds a bleak history that diverges from our world's on August 15, 1945: Japan refuses to surrender on that day, despite the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the Soviet Union's declaration of war, and three more atomic bombs are dropped in August and September of that year, on Kokura, Niigata, and Maizuru. In November 1945, the Americans invade Southern Kyushu, while the Soviet Union invades Hokkaido the following March. The military government collapses, but the population reorganizes and continues a strategic resistance.

Nearly half a century later, the United States, the Soviet Union, and China control various parts of the surface of the country. The remaining Japanese, their population decimated, have survived by digging a massive network of

tunnels under a vast stretch of the country, to which they refer simply as "the Underground." These "pure" Japanese stand in contrast to those who remained on the surface, giving birth to "half-breeds" with foreign soldiers and, later, the surplus population of various countries that find in Japan a convenient place simply to dump their undesirables. The "noncitizens" (*hikokumin*) swarm in the urban slums of Old Tokyo and Osaka, while the Japanese live in the Underground and fight the United Nations peacekeeping forces using "semicitizen" (*junkokumin*) mercenaries of mixed heritage.[1] Twice a year, the "pure Japanese" review applications for "semicitizens" of meritorious service to receive admission to the Underground—the gateway is narrow, but the Underground is proud of what it hails as its nondiscriminatory policies, and the oppressed peoples of the world admire and respect the spirit of resistance in the Underground.

What is Murakami up to here? Should we be nervous about a text that valorizes the war, that finds a way to redeem the Japanese war effort, and that posits a Japanese society with continuing obsessions with self-destruction and ideological, if not racial, purity? Murakami has brought fantastic elements into contemporary Japan before and since: In *Coin Locker Babies* (1980, *Koinrokkā beibīzu*), set in the (then) near future, the title protagonists end up in a bleak-but-imaginable Tokyo. *From the Fatherland, with Love* (2005, *Hantō o deyo*) is set in an alternate universe in which Murakami presciently predicts the global financial crisis of 2007–8: the Japanese government plunders its citizens' bank accounts, liquidity dries up, and the country declines to such an extent that North Korea under Kim Jong Il attacks it in an attempt to escape its own longstanding political conundrum.

Gofungo no sekai, however, appears to be in a different category altogether. Published just before the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the war, the novel was Murakami's salutary shot over the bow of the barrage of publications that commemorated the occasion. Parallel-universe narratives that posit a dystopic postwar Japan have only proliferated as memories of the war have receded into the past and second-generation authors and artists have mined it for material for popular fiction, manga, and anime. Anime developed from manga such as Ōtomo Katsuhiro's iconic *Akira* (1988) and Okiura Hiroyuki's *Jin-Roh* (1999, *Jinrō*), as well as more recent original material such as Shinkai Makoto's *The Place Promised in Our Early Days* (2004, *Kumo no mukō, yakusoku no basho*) and Kamiyama Kenji's *Eden of the East* (2009–10, *Higashi no Eden*), have explored parallel-world postwars with various departure points: in the present (*Akira*), the near future (*Eden*), the 1950s (*Jin-Roh*), and the 1970s (*Place Promised*).[2] *Gofungo no sekai* is a touchstone for many contemporary

alternate-postwar narratives for the way it dances with the devil on such real-world issues as notions of racial and cultural purity, victim complexes, and attempts to honor the war dead, to such an extent that Stephen Snyder reports searching the novel in vain "for signs of irony in pronouncement after pronouncement echoing right-wing propaganda."[3] Without completely refuting this, I will argue that the rhetorical logic of the novel ultimately undermines to a great extent what it appears to be idly championing on the surface.

One of the purposes of the conceit of the parallel universe, of course, is to make strange the universe in which we live—to make readers or viewers question the preconceptions under which we live our everyday lives—but *Gofungo no sekai* provides us with a test case for how different a world can become and yet stay remarkably the same. Despite the extreme differences in Japan in the world five minutes from now, the master narrative of geopolitics has not fundamentally changed. The United States and the Soviet Union engage in a Cold War, the U.S.S.R. falls in the late 1980s, and the social-studies textbook that Odagiri consults contains photos of scenes he recognizes: the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Gulf War, and so on. Proxy wars between the superpowers are fought across the period; they simply take place in Japan rather than Vietnam or Korea. The United States and China battle in the Western Kyushu War of 1950–53, implying that the Korean War shifted to Japan. The war appears to end with a line of demarcation drawn, and in the late 1960s Chinese-controlled Western Kyushu puts distance between itself and the ongoing Cultural Revolution in China, suggesting it may function as another Taiwan or Hong Kong.

Recent narratives of dystopias have depicted worlds brought about by environmental degradation or the predations of neoliberalism.[4] *Gofungo no sekai* belongs to the tradition of the geopolitical dystopic novel, whose most notable practitioner before Murakami, the science-fiction writer Komatsu Sakyō, wrote a number of alternate-reality-Japan short stories and novels. His first well-known work, the Naoki Prize–nominated "Chi ni wa heiwa o" (1963, "Peace on Earth"), prefigures Murakami's novel: The Hiroshima bomb is a dud and the coup attempt of August 15, 1945, is successful; Japan continues to fight the war.[5] An even better parallel, though, is Komatsu's short story "Sensō wa nakatta" ("There Was No War"), a largely forgotten work from 1974. Komatsu depicts a protagonist waking up one day and finding himself in a world completely unchanged except for the minor detail that World War II appears not to have taken place; no one has heard of it, the bookstores carry no books on it, and when he goes to the newspaper archive to find contemporary accounts of it, his head is muddied to the point that he cannot make sense of

what he is looking at.[6] In *Gofungo no sekai,* we have the opposite problem with the same result: a war that has never ended, but a global history that remains largely unchanged despite it. Komatsu's story we intuitively understand: thirty years later, in a Japan that no longer bears the scars of war, physically or economically, what did it matter that there had been a war? To examine the question, Komatsu removes the war—and only the war—from the equation. Without causes and effects, without a communal memory to sustain the war, it is a difficult enough problem. The question that Odagiri confronts in *Gofungo no sekai* is more ideologically fraught: what did it matter that there had been a *post*war? Meaning, how did the postwar fundamentally differ from the war?

GOFUNGO NO SEKAI IS A TOUCHSTONE FOR MANY CONTEMPORARY ALTERNATE-POSTWAR NARRATIVES FOR THE WAY IT DANCES WITH THE DEVIL ON SUCH REAL-WORLD ISSUES AS NOTIONS OF RACIAL AND CULTURAL PURITY, VICTIM COMPLEXES, AND ATTEMPTS TO HONOR THE WAR DEAD.

On the surface, the break of August 15, 1945, in which—according to the most widely accepted postwar master narrative—Imperial militarism is replaced wholesale by postwar humanism, never happens in *Gofungo no sekai,* and only the continuities remain. In our world, of course, any number of institutions in wartime Japan continued into the postwar to provide continuity, from neighborhood associations to the Diet to, most famously, the Imperial Household. In the world five minutes from now, the war and the postwar collapse into the same space and the same time; the Occupation of Japan by the Allied Powers and the continued rule of a militaristic Japan occur literally one on top of the other thanks to the development of the Underground. This could be nothing more than the logical extension of an argument in the "continuity" camp; in one sense, the novel depicts the end result of a shift in warfare, global alliances, and grand strategy from what we can call the horizontal world to a vertical one. Through the beginning of World War II, wars were fought over clearly demarcated territory. The dominant image of fighting in World War I is surely trench warfare, for which ditches were dug across great swaths of Europe (12,000 miles per side by some estimates) to protect all that lay behind, and Hitler's invasions in Europe early in World War II were depicted in terms of land annexations. The Pacific Theater was originally conceived of in the same way—witness the maps in histories of the war that depict Japanese "territory" in the Pacific, with lines drawn across thousands of miles of empty ocean. Japan's military government complained of the ABCD (American, British, Chinese, Dutch) containment policy that was restricting

its ability to import oil and other necessary materiel for its ongoing assault on China, and after Pearl Harbor quickly moved to overrun colonial territories that connected the dots on the Allied lines, Singapore chief among them. At the beginning of the war, both the American and Japanese navies were in thrall to the theories of Alfred Thayer Mahan, who, in the late nineteenth century at the U.S. Naval War College, argued for a battleship-centered navy that gained control of the sea by defeating opponents in a massive, decisive battle.[7] The Pacific Theater of World War II, however, represented a shift in warfare from the horizontal to the vertical. The Navy's traditional reliance on battleships was overturned during the war, as it became clear that aircraft carriers and the planes they launched deeper and deeper into enemy territory were more crucial. Although neither side realized it at the time, the Battle of Midway proved to be a pivotal moment in the shift from the horizontal to the vertical; practically, because Japan lost four aircraft carriers in the battle and a host of its most experienced pilots and was abruptly placed on the defensive, and symbolically, because it was the United States' carrier-based planes and not the land-based aircraft that inflicted nearly all of the damage.[8] With control of the air, not the sea, the United States' strategy was not to fight island by island, but to island-hop: to fight for specific, strategic islands that brought them ever closer to striking distance of the Japanese mainland but leave the vast majority of the rest alone. Hiroshima and Nagasaki, in this reading of the war, are the greatest examples of the triumph of the vertical. No one would have expected the war to end where it did—at "inland" targets, along no front line—and Kitamura Seibō's statue in the Nagasaki peace park is a testament to the new verticality, one hand extending skyward to warn of the "danger from the air." Despite all evidence that the war had turned from horizontal to vertical, and the tunneling that was carried out in the defense of Okinawa and other islands, in the last days of the war Japanese troops across the Amami Islands and Kyushu were still on high alert for an invasion of the Japanese main islands by sea. In the world five minutes from now, however, the remaining Japanese people understood that the world had changed, and started digging down in response.

There is no embracing defeat in the world five minutes from now, but its history somehow manages to stubbornly track our own. The Underground functions much like the conservative-leaning nation-state of Japan in our world. It has diplomatic relations with a number of countries, and it is able to achieve the so-called postwar Japanese economic miracle, under slightly different terms. At first, they produce a drug that resembles a sort of supermorphine, marketed at first to fight pain and then around the world for

recreational use—it is even legalized in the Netherlands and Switzerland. The Underground later loses the drug business to the Chinese Bloc in Kyushu, echoing the pattern of its textile and electronics industries in our world, but as in our world, advanced technology keeps it humming: The Underground is able to develop semiconductor factories in the 1980s that make it a reasonably large economic power in the world. It also faces many of the same problems as the Japan we know today: The birthrate has faced a precipitous decline, and as we have seen the Underground's solution is to turn to immigration along bloodlines, similar to what was actually happening in Japan in the 1990s with the influx of South Americans of Japanese descent.

FIGURE 1. A warning of the danger of vertical warfare carried to its logical extreme: nuclear annihilation. Photograph by Toba Kōji.

At the same time, the Underground combines this right-leaning politics with liberation ideology. The postwar in our world saw horizontal territorial claims—of empire, of colonial occupation—replaced by vertical forces that are able to govern from a distance: for Japan, the American security umbrella and a nuclear shield. In the world five minutes from now, the Underground resists the hegemony of the globalized developed world from a figurative and literal underground: it has burrowed deep into Japan itself to continue the war from below, and it redeems the war of its ancestors by struggling not in slavish imitation of the Western colonial powers but as a leftist, equal partner with Third World resistance groups against the West. Japanese freedom fighters go to Cuba in 1957 to join the cause, they participate in anti-Imperialist fights in Indochina, and they are present at the Tet Offensive. Like latter-day pariah states everywhere, they monitor CNN constantly, for evidence that the United Nations has managed to find their painstakingly concealed tunnel entrances. They are trusted across Latin America, Asia, and Africa, and have even provided world music with a Bob Marley–type figure, who remixes orchestral classics with an intricate, polyrhythmic beat that sends fans into orgasmic trances.

The clear moral victory they claim in the face of ongoing struggle has come at a cost—or, to be more precise, has come about *because* of the cost.

The social-studies textbook that Odagiri finds along the way contends that Japan's pre-1945 government lost the traditional war primarily because it did not hold life sacred; the textbook actually condemns their kamikaze attacks, group suicides, and banzai charges. The Japanese of 1945, the textbook argues, had not yet learned what it truly means to suffer, and it postulates a world similar to the one Odagiri comes from (our own) as the worst of all possible outcomes: "If the Japanese Empire had come to an end without the homeland being invaded, with just the sacrifice of Okinawa, the Japanese people would likely have learned nothing. They would have remained ignorant, and they wouldn't have the capacity to value life" (135).[9] An idealized Japan, respected throughout the world for having produced a co-prosperity sphere that reaches around the globe, enlightened at the cost of 99 percent of its citizenry—small wonder that critics have viewed the novel as neo-nationalist war apologetics.[10]

IF THERE IS IRONY TO BE FOUND IN THE NOVEL, IT IS PERHAPS IN THE FACT THAT THE EITHER/OR OF THE PARALLEL UNIVERSE BREAKS DOWN; THIS WORLD AND OUR OWN ARE TWISTED LIKE A DOUBLE HELIX.

Attempts to redeem the novel have focused on the ability of parallel worlds to tell us something about our own. One critic in Japan, searching for a reason that the world into which Odagiri falls is five minutes *ahead* of ours, instead of five minutes behind, suggests that however small the gap may be, "perhaps it stands as a warning of a crisis into which we are about to fall."[11] Against this, I would propose that any moral to the narrative is to be found in the narrative structure itself. If there is irony to be found in the novel, it is perhaps in the fact that the either/or of the parallel universe breaks down; this world and our own are twisted like a double helix. The war in that world continues, but the postwar we know from our own world is layered onto it. In this Japan as palimpsest—a new world mapped onto an older one both literally and figuratively—Odagiri experiences the present as something both new and nostalgic at the same time. Socially, Odagiri finds the Undergrounders simpler, even backwards, but their customs are, at the same time, accelerated examples of tendencies now well in place in Japan: The tatami mats—nearly gone in the modern apartments of modern Tokyo—are completely missing here, and they leave their shoes on in the house. They speak a Japanese completely stripped of *keigo,* honorific language. Even the notion that their civilization has survived underground can be read as simply a rendering strange of the familiar way that much of the life of the Tokyo we know happens below street level, as anyone who has spent a day in the

shopping malls under Tokyo, Shinjuku, or Yokohama stations can readily attest. Tokyoites are vaguely aware that the infrastructure below their feet has its own wartime history. Many of the subway lines under Tokyo are purported to be repurposed tunnels, originally carved out as air-raid shelters or secret passages during the war. The journalist Akiba Shun has long argued that the government has held some tunnels in reserve as an emergency defense; he cites subway maps that depict physically impossible situations, and lines that descend far deeper than would be necessary were there not something occupying the intermediate space.[12] Murakami is surely drawing from urban legend, then, and also, metaphorically speaking, on the notion of the barricaded subcultures that have long operated below the surface of, but on par with, mass culture in the popular imagining of Japan.

The text can perhaps most profitably be read as a narrative in which an individual is forced to live in both wartime and postwar concurrently. The people around him constantly point out that his watch is five minutes slow, meaning that he is in both a different world and five minutes in the future. The operative motif is that of the standard succession of images that constitute time in motion pictures—one world at a slight remove from another, one world giving way to the next—but also that of the simultaneity of photographic superimposition—one world layered directly on top of the other. Odagiri shifts from one world to another, but at one and the same time Odagiri himself is changed, fractured, living in a double time. Odagiri overtly indicates on a number of occasions that he sees this world—ostensibly five minutes *ahead* of his own—as part of a cinematic past: An immigration interviewer tells him that his Japanese sounds like an old samurai film. In battle, everything appears to move in slow motion. He meets a woman in the military with a face like a starlet from a "black-and-white Daiei or Tōei film"; he finds her erotic in a way his contemporaries in our world never would, because she isn't trying to sell herself to the

FIGURE 2. The Underground as it exists in our world, as documented by Akiba Shun. Photograph by author.

faceless male masses, the way they do in magazines back in the other world.[13] Here, the past exists in the present.

The supposed coarsening of our own society is synecdochically represented by the collapse of the studio system and the rise of adult film and video, and Odagiri is its avatar. His pink-film career has been a result of the collapse of the studio system in the 1960s, and by the mid-1990s—the time in which the story was both written and set—the film industry had reached a nadir in terms of films produced (from over 500 a year in 1960 to 64 films in 1996), cinema screens (the low of 1,734 was recorded in 1993, down from 7,457 in 1960), and paid attendance (moving toward a low of fewer than 120 million in 1996, from more than a billion each year from 1957 to 1960). His valorization of the studio period of the 1950s is at the same time nostalgia for his industry and for his own youth. Wars are generally fought by young men, and Odagiri's accidental exploits on the battlefield—performed out of a sheer will to survive—bring him closer to the cadre of men decades younger, alongside whom he fights. And yet, in Odagiri's parlance, these are "half-breeds" (*konketsuji*), trying to gain admission to the Underground, reminiscent of another time perhaps, but also another place: Japan's colonial past, in which the colonized were at one and the same time encouraged to become more like Japan and considered irredeemably Other.

This sentiment is alive and well half a century later. Leo Ching has noted a desire "to construct Asia as a reflection of Japan's past," a notion that works "to deny them temporal coevalness."[14] Ching cites Iwabuchi Kōichi as claiming that "there are two contradictory desires for Asia in Japan today: a nostalgia for the premodern Asia and a nostalgia for a modern Asia that reminds Japan of its immediate past."[15] Here, however, the temporal and physical displacement forcing Japan to seek nostalgia in other places forcibly set in other times has been dispelled; the "Asia that reminds Japan of its immediate past" is made possible by bringing this notion of Asia—war-torn, poverty-stricken, unevenly developing—to Japan itself. It is both 1994 and 1945, developing Asia and high-tech Japan, fifty years after the end of the conventional war and yet still wartime in Japan.

Regular readers of Murakami can't help but note that sex is missing from both the antiseptic culture of the Underground and from Odagiri's desires; it is perverse by its very absence. The irony of the novel is there, then, in its very construction; Odagiri, the porn director, gives up the everyday world he has known, one presumably filled with repetitive sexual acts, for a world continually disrupted by violence—the presumption being that one pure action is replaced by the other when a person moves from one world to another. But just

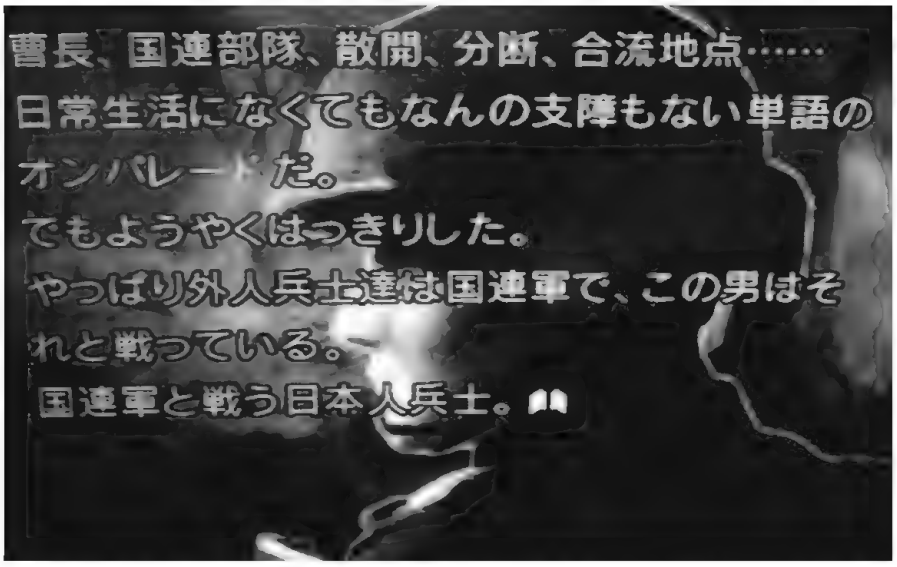


FIGURE 3. From the PS2 video game *Gofungo no sekai* (Media Factory, 2001): A slough of unfamiliar military terms, and Japanese soldiers fighting against United Nations forces.

as we can presume that Odagiri's adult movies are centered on violent acts, so are the performers on the battlefield in the world five minutes from now eternally marked as "half-breeds," the products of forbidden sexual acts. The Underground places a premium on purity. The Underground social-studies textbook claims at one point:

> We have survived without receiving aid from any other country, we have made all our decisions without surrendering to any other country, without turning into another country's lapdog, and without imitating any other country's culture; we continue to exert influence around the globe today.[16]

But this is immediately followed by a contradictory, and equally impossible, claim:

> An international observation group headed by Albert Einstein announced when it visited the Underground Command Central in 1972, "The Underground alone among all the countries of the world doesn't discriminate in any shape or form."[17]

The liberating possibility of vertical warfare turns out to be a myth, a blindered, linear obsession with purity that fails to perceive the moral ambiguity at

the margins. The claustrophobia is mirrored in the structure of the narrative itself: Odagiri moves from the hills into the Underground, and then back to where he began, always without options: in a line of refugees being marched down a road at gunpoint, down narrow hallways, in a cart on a narrow-gauge rail line. The novel unwinds in a series of set pieces that generally keep it from being more than an explication of a dystopic, semi-alternate reality, an Erewhon or Walden Two under permanent attack.[18]

THE LIBERATING POSSIBILITY OF VERTICAL WARFARE TURNS OUT TO BE A MYTH, A BLINDERED, LINEAR OBSESSION WITH PURITY THAT FAILS TO PERCEIVE THE MORAL AMBIGUITY AT THE MARGINS.

At the end of the novel, Odagiri faces a choice: to buy into the myth of the Underground, or to acknowledge the contingent, tandem reality it blocks out—the nation as palimpsest that exists in multiple realities at the same time. Odagiri and his platoon of troops are on the south side of Mount Fuji. Odagiri is supposed to be looking for the wormhole he slipped through into this world, and the troops are seeking a village of non-citizens (*hikokumin*), Japanese people who have—instead of going underground—attempted both to retain their traditional way of life and interact with the Americans who control the Tokyo area. These villagers live close to the ground and protect their traditional performing arts and poetry but are equally eager for American-made products. In short, they have made a decision roughly analogous to the one Japan made in our universe at the end of World War II—to live in the gray areas—and they are outcasts from society for doing so. In the world five minutes from now, they are despised for their compromised adherence to the old ways, both because the villagers fraternize with the enemy and because the old ways themselves have been summarily rejected by the Japanese of the Underground. The villagers greet the Undergrounders warily but invite them to a Nō performance. When Odagiri and his compatriots are ambushed, with United Nations forces closing in, however, Odagiri loads a mortar launcher and blows up not his enemies, but the Nō stage at the heart of the village.

Odagiri chooses to stay with his troop rather than search for the portal back to his home and chooses to make his first strike not against the ruling powers of the parallel world but against a symbol of the mutual past of the two worlds Odagiri has known; at first glance, then, he appears to be resisting any notion of the past or historicity, to choose the way of the Underground, which holds that the meaning of life is to be found only in immediate survival. The novel appears to move in the opposite direction from Philip K.

Dick's masterpiece of the genre, *The Man in the High Castle* (1962).[19] In Dick's world, Germany and Japan have won World War II and have largely divided the United States between them. The characters are enthralled with a banned novel, *The Grasshopper Lies Heavy,* about a parallel world in which the Allies win the war and which depicts a world similar to but not exactly the same as ours (the Allies win but Britain ends up as the hegemon). One by one, the characters experience various visions and revelations that the world as they know it is only one of many, perhaps summed up by one's reflection that "there must be world after world unseen by us, in some region or dimension that we simply do not perceive."[20] The world in which they exist does not change, but the novel ends with one character returning to it "moving and bright and living" for having the knowledge of this immanent alterity.[21]

In *Gofungo no sekai,* the fact that the two worlds' shared past is represented by a Nō performance, rather than the tea ceremony, or sumo, or any other traditional cultural form that survives as a superstructure with a different code of meanings in the present, must give the reader pause; we would be wise not to confuse Odagiri's obfuscations with the logic of the narrative. Nō is, after all, a performing art predicated on the possibility that multiple realities operate in the same sphere; in the *mugen nō* (ghost, or spirit, plays) that dominate the repertoire, the *shite* who ruminates on the long-ago history of a place inevitably reveals herself to be the protagonist of the very story she tells; he is both here in the present and also the shade of the historical

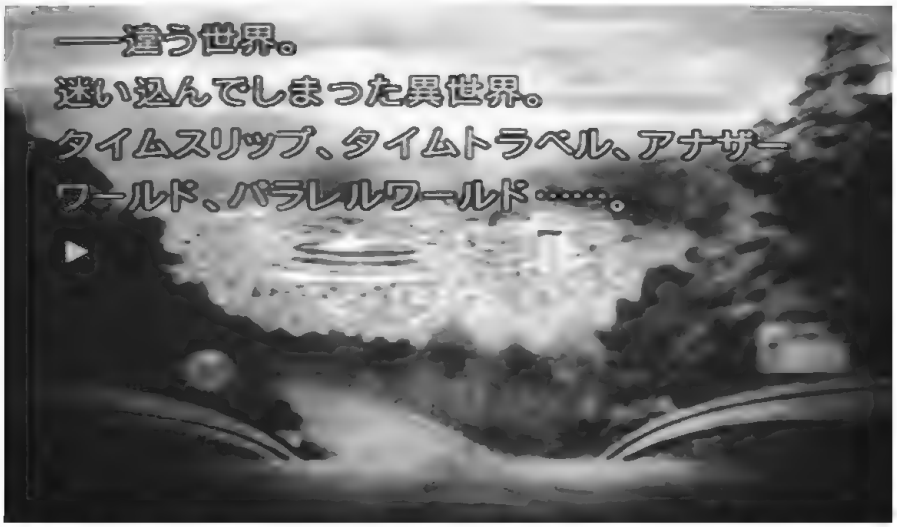


FIGURE 4. From the PS2 video game *Gofungo no sekai* (Media Factory, 2001): "Time slip, time travel, another world, parallel worlds."

personage associated with the place long ago. The noncitizens are preparing to perform *Yuya,* a *genzaimono* (contemporary, or linear-narrative play) but one that even so is predicated on absence and a heart that belongs in two places at once. Taira no Munemori refuses to let his servant Yuya go to be with her ailing mother. It is only after she has danced for him and crafted a poem that touches him that Yuya receives Munemori's blessing to return home. An African- or Balinese-style old-woman mask used in the performance—an innovation that belongs to the world five minutes from now—unnerves Odagiri, in that it conjures up memories of the mother who abandoned Odagiri as a child, in the chaos of either war or postwar. Odagiri's decision to destroy the Nō stage reveals a grim determination to obliterate any memory of a distinction between then and now, finding meaning only in his own survival, but what he attempts to destroy was never there—the lost mother does not appear in the Nō play *Yuya* in our world. Yuya is above all else a persona forced by the will of others to stay on the move: first with Munemori to a cherry-blossom festival, and then homeward in an act of filial duty. Odagiri's assault on the Nō stage sets him again in motion against forces he cannot control; in attempting to resist Yuya, Odagiri becomes her.

In the final sentence of the novel, Odagiri sets his watch forward five minutes to sync it with this world, indicating his rejection of the central paradox of his existence, and his determination to constantly move forward out of a

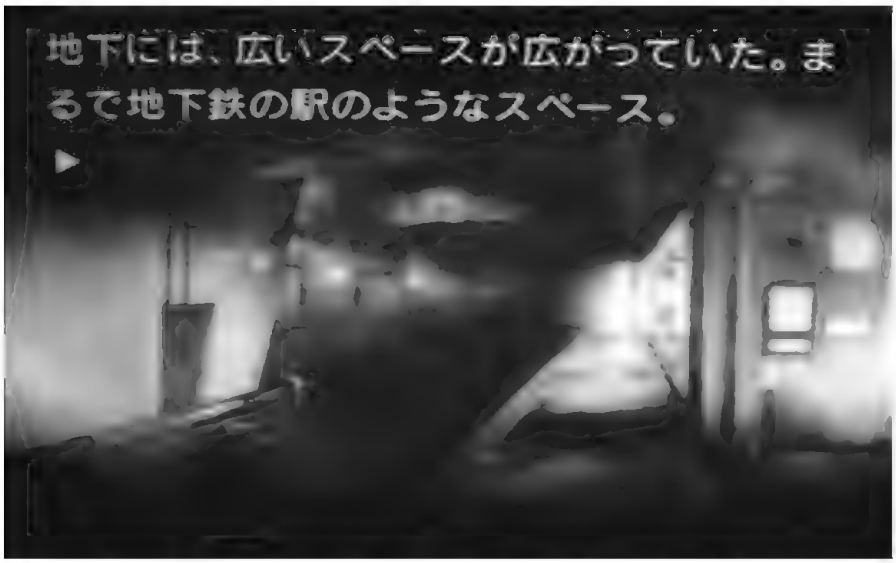


FIGURE 5. From the PS2 video game *Gofungo no sekai* (Media Factory, 2001): The Underground. A confined space, a confined narrative.

too-fraught past. It is also, as the narrative makes clear, an impossible desire. Odagiri wants to choose the purity of thrilling, frightening rupture over the compromised numbing, comforting everyday, to cut all ties with what he believes to be his world of origin. But the parallel world is already here, occupying the same space and the same time. Odagiri refuses to go home, not realizing he is already there.

Notes

The Center for Asian and Pacific Studies; the Division of World Languages, Literatures, and Cultures; and International Programs at the University of Iowa provided generous financial support for this research project.

1. The Japanese word *hikokumin* would in an ordinary context translate as something close to "traitor," but in the terminology of the novel it appears to be used literally ("noncitizen") to designate all those who are not citizens or semicitizens of the Underground. Still, at the end of the novel, it is clear that the residents of the Underground see a *hikokumin* village as a traitor to the cause. Given the disdain with which they hold the Abovegrounders, the common usage lurks in the reader's mind.

2. For a comparison of *Gofungo no sekai* and *Neon Genesis Evangelion*, see Yokohama Yūji, "Fukusū no monogatari to sekai: *Shinseiki Evangelion* to *Gofungo no sekai*," (Plural narratives and worlds: *Neon Genesis Evangelion* and *The World Five Minutes from Now*) *Hokkaido Daigaku daigakuin bungaku kenkyūka kenkyū ronshū* 2 (2002): 17–36.

3. Stephen Snyder, "Extreme Imagination: The Fiction of Murakami Ryū," in *Ōe and Beyond: Fiction in Contemporary Japan*, eds. Stephen Snyder and Philip Gabriel (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999), 217.

4. I am grateful to Stephen Vlastos for drawing out these distinctions of subgenres of dystopic narratives for me.

5. Komatsu Sakyō, "Chi ni wa heiwa o" (Peace on Earth), *Komatsu Sakyō zenshū kanzenban* 11 (Tōgane, Chiba: Jōsai kokusai daigaku, 2007).

6. Komatsu Sakyō, "Sensō wa nakatta" (There was no war), *Komatsu Sakyō zenshū kanzenban* 15 (Tōgane, Chiba: Jōsai kokusai daigaku, 2010).

7. Ronald H. Spector, *Eagle against the Sun: The American War with Japan* (New York: The Free Press, 1985), 19.

8. Ibid., 177.

9. Murakami Ryū, *Gofungo no sekai* (The world five minutes from now) (1994; repr., Tokyo: Gentōsha, 1997), 135.

10. For Murakami's effacing of the nuclear issue, see Tachio Makoto, "Murakami Ryū ga kakanakatta mono: *Gofungo no sekai* ni okeru genshiryoku to 'kiki'" (What Murakami Ryū didn't write: Nuclear power and crisis in *The World Five Minutes from Now*), *Bungei to hihyō* 11, no. 4 (2011): 59–74.

11. Hanada Toshinori, "Sensō/bōryoku shōsetsu *Gofungo no sekai* ron: tatakatte ireba makenai no desu" (On *The World Five Minutes from Now,* a novel of war and violence: If we fight, we will not lose) *Kokubungaku: kaishaku to kyōzai no kenkyū* 46, no. 9 (2001): 90–6.

12. Akiba Shun, *Teito Tōkyō: kakusareta chikamō no himitsu* (Imperial capital Tokyo: Secrets of the hidden underground network) (Tokyo: Yōsensha, 2002), and its sequel, Akiba Shun, *Teito Tōkyō: kakusareta chikamō no himitsu 2: Chika no tanjō kara "1-8 keikaku" made* (Imperial capital Tokyo: Secrets of the hidden underground network 2: From the birth of the underground to "Plans 1–8") (Tokyo: Yōsensha, 2004). For an illustrated book, see Akiba Shun, *Shashin to chizu de yomu! Teito Tōkyō chika no nazo* (Read it with photos and maps! Imperial capital Tokyo's underground mysteries) (Tokyo: Yōsensha, 2010).

13. Murakami, *Gofungo no sekai,* 148; ibid., 152.

14. Leo Ching, "Globalizing the Regional, Regionalizing the Global: Mass Culture and Asianism in the Age of Late Capital," *Public Culture* 12, no. 1 (2000): 254.

15. Ibid.

16. Murakami, *Gofungo no sekai,* 145.

17. Ibid.

18. The PlayStation 2 video game of the same name reflects this claustrophobic narrative structure. It is a "visual novel," with static background images and relatively few options for moving through the world, which is portrayed almost entirely through text. Odagiri has been replaced as the protagonist by a high school student and others. Murakami used the world for one more novel, with a different protagonist born into the world but with a similar delimited structure, *Hyūga Uirusu: Gofungo no sekai II* (The Hyūga virus: The world five minutes from now II) (Tokyo: Gentōsha, 1996).

19. I want to thank several members of the audience at the 2012 Mechademia in Seoul Conference for discussing the interesting parallels of these two novels with me. Stephen Snyder has also invoked Dick's novel to discuss Murakami's *Coin Locker Babies* and Murakami Haruki's *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World.* See "Two Murakamis and Marcel Proust: Memory as Form in Contemporary Japanese Fiction," in *In Pursuit of Contemporary East Asian Culture,* eds. Xiaobing Tang and Stephen Snyder, 69–83 (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1996).

20. Philip K. Dick, *The Man in the High Castle* (1962; repr., New York: Berkley, 1974), 237.

21. Ibid., 253.

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